

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 20, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS IN THE DENS OF NEW YORK

OR
WORKING ON THE JOHN STREET MYSTERY.
BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



SAMUEL BERCKOW

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CHAPTER I.

THE MAN WITH THE DAGGER.

It was just five o'clock in the evening of a pleasant day in June, when two Secret Service detectives, known as the Bradys, left the Criminal Court Building, in New York, and walked over to Broadway.

One of the detectives, called Old King Brady, was a tall man, with white hair, and a clean-shaven face. The other, his partner, was Harry Brady, a handsome youth of twenty, clad in stylish clothing.

As they reached Broadway their attention was suddenly attracted toward a passing man by a very peculiar circumstance.

A long, slender dagger, with a pearl handle, slipped from some part of the man's clothing, struck the sidewalk with a metallic sound, and caused the stranger to suddenly pause, stoop over and pick it up.

He glanced around, hurriedly, to see if the weapon had been observed.

Failing to catch the detectives looking at him, he felt sure it was not seen, thrust it in the breast-pocket of his coat and walked on.

Startled by the incident, the Bradys keenly sized up the individual.

He was a medium-sized, slender man, clad in gray trousers, a black Prince Albert coat and wore a silk hat, kid gloves, and carried a cane.

A black mustache and Van Dyke beard covered his face,

he had dark eyes and heavy, black eyebrows over an aquiline nose, and a mass of jet black hair, inclined to be curly, covered his head.

The man looked like a distinguished foreigner—French, probably.

The incident so aroused the suspicions of the two detectives that they determined to follow the man and find out more about him.

As he was going downtown, the Bradys crossed the street, and, mingling with the huge crowd, to hide their movements, they glided along, keeping the fastidious stranger well in view without attracting any attention to themselves.

When the man with the dagger reached the corner of John Street and Broadway, he suddenly turned eastward, at a brisk walk.

Pausing before a dingy little old-fashioned brick building he glanced at the sign board in the doorway and carefully studied the names.

His gaze finally paused at the sign of

Tom Fox. Precious Stones. 2d Floor.

The stylish stranger ascended two flights of dark stairs, and upon the ground-glass of a door at the end of the hall he saw Fox's name.

Striding forward as noiselessly as a shadow, the man opened the door.

He found himself in a little office, lit by two rear windows.

A counter, covered with blue cloth, crossed the office.

There were several stools before it, and behind it was a jeweler's work-bench, before one of the windows, at which sat a little old man in a black suit. He had a bald head, a fringe of gray hair encircling it, parted in back. His round, florid face was shaved clean.

A huge, open safe occupied the space between the windows, and a small, old-fashioned desk was beside it at the other window.

The old dealer in precious stones was weighing some rare diamonds on a decidedly poised scale when the man entered.

He held a pair of tweezers in his hand and the sparkling stones he had weighed were being assorted for size and color on a grooved ebony board. An open book contained entries of the weights of the precious stones, and numerous folded pieces of paper, lined with fine tissue, were being filled with the diamonds.

An electric alarm buzzer notified the old importer that somebody had come in, and he glanced around over the rims of his steel spectacles, sized up his caller, and asked:

"Well, sir, what can I do for you this evening?"

The dark stranger pointed at a brilliant big diamond stud glittering in his necktie, and replied, in broken English:

"Monsieur, how mooch zees stone ees worth?"

"Do you wish to sell it?" asked Mr. Fox.

"I do," assented the stranger, nodding.

"Take it out so I can examine it carefully."

"Eet ees not necessary. Just eexamine eet where eet ees."

Mr. Fox, unsuspecting of danger, leaned over the counter to get a good view of the gem, and the man suddenly gripped him by the throat with his left hand and drew the pearl-handled dagger from his pocket.

"Oh!" gasped the startled importer, trying to recoil.

"Keep steel!" hissed the stranger, a tigerish expression creeping into his eyes, while his whole countenance became distorted with the evil passion raging fiercely in his bosom.

"What are you doing?" groaned Mr. Fox, in alarm.

"I am going to keel you, monsieur!" hissed the stranger.

"You mean to rob me?" burst frantically from the old man's lips.

"Sairtainly I do," was the cold-blooded answer.

"Help! Police! Help——" shrieked Mr. Fox, hoarsely.

The dark fellow's sinuous fingers tightened on the old man's windpipe, choking off his utterance and depriving him of his breath.

Mr. Fox grew blue in the face and began to cough and choke.

He strove to tear that merciless death-grip from his throat, but was no match for this powerful man.

"Eef you don't keep steel," hissed the stranger, furiously, "I weel put an end to your life in wan minute more!"

"I won't submit to this!" raved the old importer.

"Monsieur, you haf to!"

"I won't, I tell you!"

"Zen, by gar, you die!"

Mr. Fox, by a superhuman effort, tore himself free.

The stranger had drawn back the dagger to plunge it into the old merchant's heart when his victim released himself.

With his eyes bulging and his scant hair bristling, the panting old man recoiled and shrieked, in frenzied tones:

"Help! Police! Murder!"

Leaping over the counter, with the agility of a panther, the Frenchman sprang at his victim and they fell to the floor, locked in a tight embrace. A terrific struggle ensued.

The Bradys had seen the suspicious man enter the building, and stealthily crept upstairs after him.

Pausing at the head of the first flight of stairs they listened.

Finally the yells and the noise of the struggle reached the detectives' ears, and Old King Brady exclaimed:

"There's trouble going on here, Harry."

"Sounds as if some one were getting killed," replied the boy.

"Rush up and we'll investigate the row."

"It's at the rear of the building."

Up another flight they dashed, and listened.

Not a sound reached their ears.

They found several doors opening on the hall, and opening them they looked inside the offices to which they gave admittance.

Each one was vacant.

Trying the door of Tom Fox's office, they found it locked.

"Mighty queer!" growled Old King Brady, in perplexed tones, as he took a chew of plug tobacco. "All the offices are empty except this one, and we can't open it."

"Break in the door!" suggested the boy.

They rushed at the door, hit it with their shoulders, and, smashing the lock, the door flew open.

A burglar alarm was set off by this action.

The Bradys dashed into the office and glanced around.

The office was in confusion.

Chairs and counter were upset, the jeweler's bench was smashed, some of the little drawers in the big safe were pulled out and were heaped in the middle of the room, and the old desk was half overturned.

"Looks as if a cyclone struck this place," said Old King Brady.

"The yells must have come from here," the boy answered.

"But there's nobody in the place."

Old King Brady spoke the truth.

Both the old importer and his assailant had vanished.

Just then Harry's glance fell upon a blood-stained dagger lying on the floor, and he picked it up, held it aloft, and exclaimed:

"See this! It's the knife we saw that man drop on Broadway."

"So it is," Old King Brady assented. "Covered with blood, too!"

"The floor and walls are spattered with gore," said Harry.

"A murder must have occurred here."

"Yes," agreed Harry, "and the criminal must have been the very man we were shadowing. This dagger gives him away."

"Not a single piece of jewelry left in those drawers," Old King Brady added, as he pointed at the heap. "Robbery must have been the motive of this deed. All the jewelry is gone."

Harry traced the blood-stains to one of the windows, which now stood open, and remarked:

"The criminal must have gone out this way with his victim."

He peered out the window into the little courtyard below, but he failed to see any signs of any one.

"How strange!" the boy muttered. "How did they get away so quickly after that fight? What has become of them?"

"I'm afraid we are on the eve of a great mystery, Harry," remarked Old King Brady. "The question is, to solve it."

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGE MYSTERY.

"You are my prisoner!" roared a policeman, rushing into the office and seizing Harry by the collar with one hand, while with the other he raised his heavy night-club.

"Hold on there!" gasped the startled boy. "What do you mean?"

A man from the burglar alarm agency now dashed in.

He made a rush at Old King Brady, and seized him by the arm.

"If you resist," said he, displaying a revolver, "I'll shoot you."

"Take us for thieves?" quietly asked the old detective, as an amused smile crossed his face.

"Of course. Didn't you break open this door?"

"We did."

"See those drawers pulled out of the safe?"

"We were looking at them."

"They are looted."

"So I observe."

"What did you do with the swag?"

"Hunting for it now. We are detectives."

"Prove it."

Old King Brady exhibited his badge.

The policeman and the agent released them at once.

Both looked crestfallen, and the policeman asked:

"How did you get here ahead of us?"

Old King Brady told them, and then exclaimed:

"It looks as if there had not only been a robbery here, but a murder as well. We must examine into this affair carefully. Search the building. We must find the man who came up here, and the importer of precious stones. They have not come down past us yet, so they must be up here still. I am puzzled, though, over their sudden and mysterious disappearance."

Harry, the policeman and the agent hurried out of the office.

Left alone, all the keenest detective instincts in Old King Brady were aroused.

He made a careful examination of the little office.

There was absolutely no place in there in which a man could have hidden, except the big safe and that stood wide open.

Peering out the open window, to which the trail of blood-stains ran, he saw that it was at least thirty feet down to the little courtyard in the rear. The bottom of the court was flagged.

It was surrounded on four sides by brick walls, through which there was no opening whatever by means of which a man could escape.

Above, the roof was thirty feet overhead, with no means of reaching it from the window in which Old King Brady stood.

The rear of a Fulton Street building rose opposite, and about on a line with where the detective stood it was pierced by a window covered by the sheet-iron, fire-proof shutters, which were closed tightly.

"This rear shaft is the only means of exit, except the hall door," said Old King Brady, reflectively. "But I'm blest if there is any sign of anybody having passed out this way. If a man were to go down in that light-shaft he couldn't get out at the bottom. To reach the roof above without a rope would be utterly impossible. Yet I could swear that no one came out into the hall. If that man, who had this knife, killed the occupant of this room, where did he vanish to, with his victim, so mysteriously?"

Finding he could not gain any information there, he next turned his attention upon the floor and went down on his hands and knees.

It was covered with carpet. Not a clew was found there.

He next began to replace the tray drawers in the safe, and observed that not one of them contained a piece of jewelry.

They were completely empty.

Old King Brady picked up the overturned furniture, and his keen eyes noted every minute object, but he failed to detect anything which would shed any light on the mystery.

The safe contained nothing but Mr. Fox's set of books.

"Those voices, the blood-stains on the carpet and window, and this knife are the only proof we can find in here," muttered Old King Brady at length. "Ah! here come the others back."

Harry led the rest in, and had the janitor with him. "Is he all you could find upstairs?" demanded Old King Brady, drily.

"Yes. No one else," the boy answered.

"See here," said the old detective to the janitor, "do you know what happened in here a while ago to alarm us?"

"Faith ther young felly jist towld me," replied the janitor.

"Do you know anything about the matter?"

"Sure an' I don't. But I kin tell yer this much, sor—it's not ten minutes ago I seen aould Mr. Fox in his office."

"Are you sure?"

"I am that. He nivver laves till six ivery night."

"How do you know he was here ten minutes ago?"

"Whin I kem up I shtuck me head in ther dure an' shpoke to him. There wor a skinny felly, billy-goat whiskers, a-comin' up, an' I seen him go inter Mr. Fox's office as I wint up ter me room on the top flure."

"Well," said Old King Brady, "from the moment that man with a beard entered Mr. Fox's office to the present moment no one came out of there. We know that to be absolutely true, as we've been here since the man entered the building."

"Where did he an' Mr. Fox go?"

"I don't know. We heard yells for help, and rushed up. When we broke open the door the office was empty. As you can see, the door was locked on the inside, for the key is yet in the lock."

They observed that this assertion was true, and it greatly added to the mystery already perplexing them.

"Sure they must have joomped out ther windy," said the janitor.

"No, they didn't. I've looked to see if they made their disappearance that way. Harry, have you been up to the roof?"

"Yes. And they could not have vanished that way," the boy replied. "The buildings on each side of this one rise up at least two stories higher than this house; therefore they could not reach the adjoining roofs without a ladder."

Old King Brady now turned to the janitor and asked: "Where does Mr. Fox live?"

"No. — Lexington Avenue, near Twenty-eighth Street, sor."

"Did he have a wife?"

"Only a darter named Sadie, an' it's the illegant crathur she is, too."

"Was the old gentleman rich?"

"A millionaire entoirely."

"Had he a partner?"

"I don't know that. I think not."

"Do you know what he had in his safe?"

"I do. I've often seen ther contints av thim dhrawers. They wor fild wid jewelry mounted wid diamonds an' other precious stones, an' he had a big, black leather pocketbook filled wid unset stones."

"All those things are gone now. Did he sell them all out?"

"Sure an' he must have done it widin' two hours if he did at all, for I wor in here an' seen manny av ther t'ings I've mintioned whin he pulled out thim thrays. I'm sure he had ther big pocketbook av unset shtones, for I seen it wid me own oyes."

"Then the old gentleman certainly has been robbed."

"He was that if all thim t'ings do be garn."

"Is that a picture of him?" asked Old King Brady, pointing at an oil painting hanging on the wall.

"Faith it is, an' a very good loikness, indade."

The detectives studied it intently to impress the face on their minds.

Then Old King Brady asked the janitor:

"Did Mr. Fox have any clerks?"

"Divil a wan. He did all his own buyin' an' sellin'."

The Bradys then held a whispered conversation for a few moments and finally turning to the burglar alarm agent, Old King Brady said to him:

"Fasten up the door again. This policeman will guard the place until we look further into the matter."

"Very well, sir," replied the agent.

The detectives thereupon left the premises.

Proceeding uptown to Mr. Fox's house, they rang for admittance.

A servant ushered them into the parlor of the old-fashioned brick house and took their card upstairs to Sadie Fox.

She soon came down and joined them.

The girl was about eighteen. She had a fine figure, clad in a blue silk dress. A wealth of dark-brown hair clustered upon her shapely head, her brown eyes gleamed prettily over a sharp nose, and there was a pretty pink tint in her plump cheeks.

"Messrs. Brady, I presume?" she asked.

The detectives bowed assent, and Harry replied:

"We are here on very important business, Miss Fox."

"Indeed! And what may that be?"

"We've got some unpleasant news about your father."

"My father?" she echoed, in surprise.

"He has disappeared."

The girl glanced at them in amazement.

"Why," said she, "that's queer."

"Rather serious," said Harry.

"I can't see it in that light."

"Why can't you?"

"Because I was with him less than a quarter of an hour ago."

It was the Bradys' turn now to look astonished.

CHAPTER III.

ON A DANGEROUS CASE.

When the Bradys recovered from the first shock of surprise the girl's words produced, Harry exclaimed:

"Please summon your father. We wish to speak to him."

"I can't," replied Sadie Fox. "He has gone out."

"What time did he come in?"

"At seven o'clock."

"It is now twenty minutes past seven," said Harry, looking at his watch.

"Yes. Papa only remained in about five minutes."

"Do you know where he has gone?"

"No, sir, I do not."

"Did you notice anything peculiar about your father?"

"I did, and it has been worrying me ever since. He was acting queerly."

"What did he say to you when he returned home?"

"Not a single word. This was very unusual. He always was in the habit of greeting me with a kiss, and asking me about my household affairs. But to-night he came in silently, paid no heed to me, and went up to his bedroom. His hair was mussed up, his clothes were torn, his collar and cravat were gone and there was blood on his hands and face. I noticed a queer look in his eyes, too."

"What happened then?"

"He remained a few minutes in his room, came downstairs again, and, going out the front door, he walked rapidly away down the street."

"Without uttering a word?"

"Exactly. Now why did you come here to tell me he disappeared?"

Harry gave her an account of all that happened in John Street, and in conclusion he asked her:

"Did your father have a parcel of jewelry with him? I thought perhaps it was he who emptied the safe."

"No. He had nothing in his hands," answered the girl, with an anxious, worried look on her face.

"What do you make of the mysterious affair?"

"It looks to me as if an attempt upon his life had been made," the girl answered, "and he was, undoubtedly, robbed."

"That's exactly our opinion, Miss Fox."

"You had better see papa about the matter."

"We intend to, if we can find him."

"Oh, he will probably be back soon for his supper."

"Then we'll wait for him."

"That's a relief to my mind, Mr. Brady."

"You don't know that he had any enemies, do you?"

"He never mentioned any to me."

"Does any one call here to see him?"

"No one calls here at all except a gentleman who used to come to see me."

"Who was he?"

"Mr. Ralph Denton."

"A friend of yours?"

The girl's face flushed and she nodded.

Harry saw at once that he was a lover of hers.

To make sure of his surmise he asked Sadie:

"Why did he call here?"

"Well," she replied, hesitatingly, "he wanted to marry me."

"Are you engaged to him?"

"My father took a great dislike to him. He ordered Mr. Denton from the house. It made me feel bad, for I—I—cared for him."

"How long ago was that?"

"Six months."

"Haven't you seen him since?"

"No. Mr. Denton went to Denver."

"But you wrote to him?"

"Yes, we corresponded."

"Then your father's objection did not make you give him up?"

"We did not give up hope of overcoming papa's unreasonable aversion. Mr. Denton intends to come back soon and see papa about the matter, and I guess he will gain his point."

"I hope so," laughed Harry. "What is Mr. Denton's business?"

"He is a traveling salesman now, he writes, but papa said he was opposed to him before, because he was a gambler."

"Ah!" said Harry, with a startled look. "Gambler, eh? Have you got a picture of the gentleman in question?"

"Yes," replied Sadie, opening a little gold locket hanging from her watch chain. "Here it is."

The detectives gazed at the photograph in the locket.

It showed a handsome fellow of about thirty, with a curved mustache, wavy hair and a Roman nose.

There was a dashing, devil-may-care look about his face, and a bold, defiant expression in his big, dark eyes.

Neither of the detectives recognized him as a professional gambler of Gotham, although they knew most of them by sight.

"Nice-looking chap," commented Harry.

"I think so," said the girl, innocently.

They remained talking to her until midnight, and learned all about her father and herself.

But Mr. Fox did not return.

The girl had grown frantic with alarm.

The detectives tried to reassure her.

"Something dreadful has happened to him," she exclaimed, in tones of conviction. "I know it."

"Oh, he will come back," said Harry. "But we will send out a general alarm to the police, anyway. If he don't appear, they will find him and bring him home to you."

"Will you do that for me?" she asked, eagerly.

"Oh, yes," replied Harry. "Don't worry."

They then departed and called at police headquarters in Mulberry Street, where they detailed all that happened.

In a quarter of an hour later the captain of every precinct in the city received telephonic notice to have his men keep a lookout for the missing man. Then the Bradys went home to their lodgings in Irving Place and turned in for the night.

On the following morning they received a hurried summons from the Chief of the New York Division of the

Secret Service to call at his office for instructions on an important case.

After breakfast they went down to see him.

He was impatiently striding up and down his private office, chewing on the end of a cigar, when they entered.

Glancing up at them, he cried:

"So! You've arrived at last, have you?"

"What do you want of us?" demanded Old King Brady, quietly.

"I've got some work I want you to attend to."

"Of what does it consist?"

"Running down some crooks in the dens of New York."

"What is the case?"

"For a long time a well-organized gang has been preying on the people; robbing them right and left. The gang is getting bolder and bolder every day that goes by, without the police capturing any of them. Complaints are of daily occurrence. The police are unable to cope with the situation. The best detectives on the municipal force have failed to accomplish anything. As nothing has been done to stop the repeated crimes, a committee of prominent citizens has been formed to abate the nuisance, and they have appealed to me to aid them."

"I see," said Old King Brady.

"The gang," continued the chief, lighting his cigar, "consists of a score or more of noted crooks, banded under the leadership of a daring individual known as Captain Jack. They are the worst and most daring gang of bandits who ever infested a city. Their crimes range from highway robbery to murder in the first degree."

"We've heard something of this gang already," said Old King Brady.

"Then you are aware of their atrocities, and know some of the members."

"Have you got a list of them?"

"Some. I'll give them to you."

He opened a book and read off some names.

The Bradys recognized them as some of the most notorious thieves, pickpockets, confidence men and all-around crooks in the criminal fraternity of the city.

"Do you know which dens they mostly infest?" asked Harry.

"I've been told by the police of a few, and I'll have to depend upon you to search the rest," replied the chief, and he mentioned the names of several well-known resorts on the East Side.

The Bradys discussed the matter for some time longer with their chief, and realized that they had a dangerous job to handle.

Both knew very well that the crooks they were going after were men who would not hesitate to kill them if they found out that the detectives were going to put them under arrest.

The Bradys then told the chief about the John Street mystery.

"If you can," said he, "I wish you would try to ascertain the facts in that matter. It looks like a very serious case."

"Who knows," replied Old King Brady, "but what the

John Street case may have been worked by members of the very gang we are going to run down?"

"We will find that out in due time," added Harry.

And the detectives left the office to begin their campaign against the crooks in the dens of New York.

CHAPTER IV.

FINDING THE HEADLESS BODY.

By nightfall the detectives ascertained that Mr. Fox had not yet come home, and a call at his office showed that he had not been there.

As he had no friends or relations upon whom he called, belonged to no clubs, lodges or the militia, and always spent his time either in his home or his office, his long absence took a serious aspect.

Disguised as a couple of laborers, the Bradys, at nightfall, went over to Cherry Street to investigate a well-known resort for crooks.

It was a vile den near Mechanics' Alley—a dirty little groggery in the basement of a dilapidated old brick building.

The ceiling was low, the floors covered with sawdust, and a small bar at the side was presided over by a one-eyed man with a hang-dog face.

All the tables and chairs were occupied by the toughest ruffians in the ward, who were smoking and chewing tobacco, drinking and talking and yelling at some people dancing on the floor to the tune of an old piano, upon which a negro was pounding.

A dense smoke filled the vile-odored atmosphere, almost obscuring the dim lights illuminating the place.

The den was in full blast when the Bradys entered, and as they glanced around at the patrons they recognized the features of some of the most desperate crooks in New York.

Owing to the nature of the Bradys' disguises, the gang paid but little heed to them, and they sat down at a table in a corner.

A bullet-headed waiter rushed up, got an order for two beers and brought them to the detectives.

Close by sat two thieves who had not long been out of jail for a crime for which the Bradys had convicted them.

One was called Skin Evans and the other Big Bill Jones.

Clad in rough garments, and with sun-burned, unshaven faces, and having the stamp of rascality all over them, they were talking in audible whispers, to which the detectives listened.

"Wot time is it, Bill?" asked Evans.

"De clock jist struck ten, Skin," growled the other.

"Say, ain't it time fer us ter slip de floater?"

"How's der tide?"

"Ebb. Turns in half an hour."

"Den de stiff'd git carried near the Cob Dock at de Navy Yard."

"Sure. Dat's wot we want."

"Come on, den."

They both rose to go, and Harry nudged his partner and whispered:

"Did you hear that? They are monkeying with a corpse."

"Evidently. I wonder if they killed a man and mean to put the body in the river? Their conversation indicates it."

"By following them we might ascertain."

"We may be on the eve of a murder mystery."

"In that case we should not lose track of them."

They silently followed the crooks out of the den.

Evans and Jones went down Pike Street to the river front and going out on a pier they climbed down into a boat and rowed away.

It was very dark and gloomy on the East River that night.

As the Bradys rushed out on the pier to the end of it and saw the crooks rowing across the stream, they heard moving oars.

The sound approached nearer, coming from up the river.

Presently a harbor police boat loomed up in the gloom.

"Ahoy, there!" cried Harry, noting four officers on the boat.

The captain of the skiff glanced up and replied, gruffly:

"What do you want?"

"Come here—quick. We are detectives."

"Detectives?"

"The Bradys."

"Oh! I know you."

"Take us aboard, will you?"

"Certainly. What's up?"

"We are after two crooks who just went out on the river in a rowboat."

"Indeed!" said the policeman, steering toward the dock.

"What did they do?"

"Concerned in foul play, we believe."

"Just climb down here and we'll chase them."

The detectives embarked and revealed their identity.

As the captain knew them by sight, he was satisfied.

They told him about the two crooks, and he ordered his men to give way, and the boat shot out on the river.

The foot of Pike Street was left astern.

Nothing was seen of the boat containing Skin Evans and Big Bill Jones, but as the detectives inferred from what they said that they were going toward the Cob Dock at the Navy Yard, they had the river police row that way.

But few boats were going up and down the stream, and they would not have been seen but for the lights gleaming from their peak lanterns and port lights.

The police boat headed toward the Navy Yard.

When it reached the bend in the river, there came a sudden jolt as the prow struck some drifting object.

It brought the boat to a pause.

"What's that?" demanded the captain.

"Looks like a log, sir," replied one of the men peering over the gunwhale at a dark object.

"Back water!"

The rowers obeyed.

Old King Brady sat in the bow.

Picking up a boat-hook, he reached out toward the dark, floating object and caught hold.

Dragging it over to the side of the boat he flashed the light of his dark-lantern upon it.

To his surprise he saw it was the body of a man.

"Floater!" he exclaimed.

"Man or woman?" queried the captain.

"It's a man."

"Suicide, I suppose."

"I'll pull it in. Help me, Harry."

He shipped the boat-hook and seized the floating body.

Between the pair they raised the corpse from the water and dragged it into the boat, where Harry turned the light upon it again.

A cry escaped Old King Brady.

Pointing at the body, he exclaimed, excitedly:

"See there! The head is missing."

And so it was. Every one looked at it.

The headless trunk presented a ghastly sight.

"What does this mean?" asked the captain.

"Murder mystery, perhaps," Harry replied.

"The screw-blade or paddle-wheel of a boat could have cut off the poor fellow's head," said the police boat captain.

"Coroner's inquest may decide that," answered Old King Brady. "Speculating won't solve the problem now."

The men gave way at the oars and the boat glided ahead.

They finally reached the Cob Dock and searched the vicinity carefully, but failed to see anything of the two thieves.

At the end of an hour the boat captain said:

"I guess those crooks escaped."

"May as well give it up," answered Old King Brady.

"We'll run up to the morgue with this floater."

And the boat was steered up the stream.

When they reached the dead-house, the headless body was set ashore with the two detectives, and they carried it into the building and laid it on a slab.

The morgue-keeper took a report of the finding of the body.

When this was done, Old King Brady said to him:

"I'm going to try to identify that corpse."

"Can't, without the head," replied the morgue-keeper.

"There may be something in the pockets which would lead to our finding out who he is."

"Search him and see, Mr. Brady."

The detectives set about it systematically and brought to light a few business letters, a bank book, a bunch of keys and a pocket knife. An old-fashioned pocketbook contained a few dollars and some change.

The Bradys observed that the body was that of a short, thin man of advanced years, clad in black.

His underwear was of good material, and he wore laced shoes.

Harry examined the letter and bank book.

They were addressed to Tom Fox, and the bank book showed a large balance in the Chemical National Bank.

When this discovery was made, Old King Brady exclaimed:

"It must be the body of the old diamond importer who disappeared from the John Street office."

"Then he ended his mysterious disappearance by a plunge in the river," replied the boy. "Poor Sadie! She will be heart-broken when she learns her father's fate."

"I wonder whether he was a victim of foul play?"

"We may see by examining the body," said Harry, briefly.

Following out this suggestion, they soon observed that there were no marks of violence upon the corpse except the horrible gash of decapitation.

"No knife delivered that wound," Old King Brady asserted, in positive tones. "The edges of the neck are too badly torn. It looks to me as if his head were cut off by the wheel of a passing boat. But that don't explain the mystery of whether the man was the victim of an accident or of foul play."

CHAPTER V.

AFTER THE THIEVES.

The John Street mystery was deepened by the finding of that headless body in the East River, and the Bradys began to wonder if Evans and Jones were responsible for the corpse being found in the water.

All their conversation in the Cherry Street den seemed to denote that they were going to have something to do with putting a corpse in the river. And they calculated that the current would carry it in the vicinity where the headless body was found.

To set at rest the identity of the headless corpse, the Bradys went to see Sadie Fox on the following afternoon, and as gently as possible broke the dreadful news to her.

She was terribly shocked, of course.

When she recovered from it she proceeded to the morgue with the detectives, in a cab, and was shown the body.

The sight made her faint.

But when she revived, she cried:

"Yes, that is the body of my poor old father."

"How can you tell?" Old King Brady asked her.

"By the clothing. They are my father's clothes. I've seen that suit and linen too often to be deceived. Then there's his old-fashioned seal ring on the little finger of his left hand. I'd recognize that ring among a thousand, and that's exactly the way he always wore it. Then those business letters addressed to him contain references to matters in which I know my father was concerned. The bank book speaks for itself. It isn't likely that a person other than my father would have it. The knife is his, and I've often used that bunch of keys to unlock his safe, desk and bureau at home. Oh, no—there can be no mistake about the matter, Mr. Brady; this is unquestionably the corpse of my father."

Her positive identification settled the matter, and application was made by the girl to remove the body for burial.

After the coroner's inquest an undertaker called for the corpse, and several days afterward it was interred.

The verdict of the coroner's jury was that the old importer had met his death by drowning and decapitation, either by accident or design. They could only surmise.

Mr. Fox's will was produced, and in it he bequeathed a fortune of half a million to his daughter Sadie.

He stipulated that his business should be continued for a year after his death, and as the girl was capable of carrying it on, his wish in this respect was granted.

The Bradys carefully noted all the points in this remarkable case, and drew their own conclusions while they were hunting about for clues to capture Captain Jack's gang.

"It is possible that Mr. Fox may be a victim of the man who robbed his office," said Old King Brady, one night, as he and Harry made their way up the Bowery. "There was something peculiar about that whole case. We can't seem to discover where the thief and Mr. Fox went to when they disappeared from that John Street office. Yet, a short time later, Fox was seen in his own home. When he went from there he must have gone to the river and perished, for it was only a short time afterward that we found his headless body in the water."

"It's mysterious how he died or was killed," said Harry. "That it was Fox, there can't be any doubt since his own daughter positively identified his body."

"Our only hope to find the thief who robbed him lies in finding out where the stolen jewelry was sold or pawned."

"We may have some chance to accomplish that now," said Harry, "for to-day, as you know, when an inventory of his stock was taken, I secured a copy of his books. We thus have a fair description of the missing jewelry. Some of it is pretty sure to be found among the pawnbrokers. We must call on them some day this week."

Just then they reached the corner of Delancey Street, and turning into that thoroughfare they saw two crooks emerge from the side door of a corner saloon and hurry toward Chrystie Street.

Old King Brady seized Harry's arm and they slunk back in the shadows of a nearby billboard.

"There goes Evans and Jones!" whispered the old detective.

"We ought to nab them and make the pair tell us what they were doing on the river the other night," said Harry.

"They may know something about that headless body."

"Follow them, then."

Along they glided, in pursuit of the pair, as far as Eldridge Street, and the two crooks turned into that thoroughfare.

In the middle of the block they paused before a dry goods store, a sign over the door of which bore the name of Samuel Berchowsky.

The store was closed and locked for the night.

Lights were gleaming in the windows of the flats over

the store in the old building, and the crooks glanced up and down the street.

Suddenly they glided into the hallway.

A policeman darted from behind a nearby wagon, ran up to the Bradys and said to them, in hurried tones:

"Did yez see ther two crooks go in there?"

"Yes, and we are after them," replied Old King Brady, glancing up at the fire-escape. "We are the Bradys."

"Oh! Ther Secret Service min? I've heard av yez."

"Will you help us to nab those men?"

"I will that."

"Then follow me."

And into the hallway they darted.

They heard the crooks ascending the stairs and pause at the hall above, where they began to rattle keys in a lock.

Presently these sounds ceased with the opening and shutting of a door, and Old King Brady whispered:

"They've gone into a flat on the floor above."

Just then a door on the same floor opened and two young Jewesses came down the stairs, laughing and chatting.

Harry stopped them and asked the eldest:

"Who lives on the floor above?"

"We live there with my father," replied the girl, "but he is out. We own the store downstairs and use the flat next to ours as a storage for goods. But why do you ask?"

"Because we are officers. Two crooks just opened the door of the flat next to the one you live in and are there now."

"My goodness!" gasped the startled girl, turning pale. "We are being robbed. I've got a pistol belonging to father, upstairs, and I'm going to get it and shoot the burglars."

"Don't be hasty," said Harry, quietly. "We will attend to them. You might guard against their escape, though, by posting yourself at one of the windows with your gun."

"We will."

"Don't alarm the thieves by making any noise."

"Oh, we will be careful," said the girl.

She had recovered her composure by this time, and after a whispered consultation with her sister, they quietly went upstairs again and passed into their flat.

The Bradys and the policeman crept quietly to the door of the room where the crooks had disappeared, and listened.

Inside they heard the villains quietly moving about, and then Big Bill Jones exclaimed, in low tones:

"Say, Skin, have yer got de goods bundled up yet?"

"Certainly, Bill," replied the other. "We kin chuck de two bundles outer de winder, when de coast is clear, run downstairs, pick 'em up an' slide inter Cohen's fence wid 'em, aroun' de corner."

"Lordy, won't de Goose be mad when he finds we've tapped him!"

"Are yer ready?"

"Sure."

"Den grab yer bundle."

Just then the detectives tried the door and found it locked.

Slight as the noise was that they made, it alarmed the thieves.

"Some one a-comin'!" they heard Evans gasp.

"Run fer de front fire-escape!" panted Bill.

Realizing that they would lose their men if they did not hurry, the Bradys dashed at the door and smashed it open.

They found themselves in a dark flat filled with merchandise.

The crooks had made up two bundles of the goods to steal when the arrival of the detectives alarmed them.

Evans and his pal were rushing through the flat to the front room, where they flung open a window.

Out they went, and vanished from view.

"Hurry, or we'll lose them!" cried Harry, and followed by his companions they rushed through the flat.

Evans and Jones were on the iron platform outside the window, seeking a means to reach the street below.

Out on the fire-escape dashed the Bradys and the policeman.

Both crooks made a desperate attempt to escape.

But the detectives baffled this design by seizing them.

In the window stood the girl, ready to shoot the villains.

CHAPTER VI.

ARREST AND CONVICTION OF THE CROOKS.

In his desperation, Evans deliberately leaped from the platform just as Old King Brady seized him and arrested his fall.

Big Bill was going to drop off the end of the fire-escape, when Harry caught hold of each of his wrists.

In a minute more the detectives pulled the two crooks in on the platform, and a fearful struggle began between them.

Evans drew a knife and aimed a blow at Old King Brady with it. But the policeman brought his club down on the villain's hand almost breaking it and caused him to drop the knife.

Evans gave a yell of pain.

Before he recovered, Old King Brady had him handcuffed.

Harry had his man pinned down with a vise-like grip on his throat, and yelled to his partner:

"Come here and secure this fellow!"

"Where are your handcuffs?" asked Old King Brady.

"In my jacket pocket."

"Hang onto him a moment longer."

The old detective took the shackles out and they rolled Big Bill over on his stomach, pulled his arms behind his back and in a moment more he was secured.

The crooks now saw who had them.

"Blast you, Brady!" roared Big Bill, furiously. "Youse fellers is ther curse of our existence. No sooner do we git out o' prison after servin' time when you nabs us ag'in."

"Got dead evidence against you, too, Bill," answered the old detective. "You were trying to rob the flat."

"How in blazes did yer git next?"

"Followed you."

"Now we're good fer a five-year stretch."

"More than that, Bill; more than that."

"Yer can't do it. Burglary's ther charge, of course."

"We've got something worse up our sleeves."

The crook began to look very uneasy, and he finally asked.

"Wot now, I'd like ter know?"

"Murder!" hissed the detective.

"Wot!" yelled the startled crook.

"I refer to the headless man in the river."

The crooks turned as pale as death and gazed at each other in blank dismay for the space of a few moments.

It was quite clear to the detectives that they had the pair worried, and they studied the changing expression of their features.

Finally Bill recovered from the shock, and asked, defiantly:

"Say, wot d'yer mean by that, Brady?"

"I mean just this," replied the old detective. "The other night Harry and I shadowed you two in the den in Cherry Street, near Mechanics' Alley. We heard you say you were going to slip a floater near the Cob Dock. Do you recollect it?"

"Well?" growled the crook, sourly.

"Don't you remember the two men looking like laborers who sat in a corner near you? They were Harry and I."

"Wuz dat youse two?" asked Bill, in surprise.

"Yes. We followed you in a harbor police boat, and picked up the headless body of the floater you set adrift."

"We didn't set no headless floater adrift."

"You lie!"

"I tell yer, we didn't."

"What floater did you set adrift?"

"None," growled Bill. "We went over ther river ter git in a poker game wot was goin' on in Brooklyn."

"Then how do you account for what you said?"

"Oh, we knowed who you were, in the Cherry Street joint, an' only said that ter lead yer on a wild goose chase."

"Bill, you are lying again. A moment ago you didn't know we were in that den until we told you about it."

"Did yer see us put that floater adrift?"

"No," replied the old detective.

"Then how kin yer prove we did?"

"We will prove it yet. Moreover, we will find out what interest you have in the robbery and murder of old Mr. Fox, the John Street diamond importer."

"Don't know such a party."

"Of course, we expect you to deny all knowledge of the matter, but we've got you where we want you now, and when the time of reckoning comes we'll be able to put our hands on you easily for that atrocious piece of crooked work."

With this remark they made the crooks get up, and dragged them through the flat, down the stairs and into the street.

Here they found the two girls awaiting them.

"You come along and appear against them for trying to rob your father's place," said Harry to them.

They readily assented, and off the whole party went.

Arrived at the station house the two prisoners were arraigned before the captain's desk and their pedigrees taken. A charge of burglary was entered on the blotter against them.

When this was done the captain said to the policeman: "Search them."

The officer complied.

Among other things taken from the pair were several pawn tickets.

"Let me see those tickets, captain," said Old King Brady.

They were promptly handed over, and the detectives carefully scrutinized them.

There were ten of them made out by a prominent Bowery pawnbroker, and they called for diamond-mounted jewelry.

The fact of such crooks as these two men were having tickets for jewelry upon which they had raised very large loans, was very suspicious, and Old King Brady said to the captain:

"A John Street jeweler was robbed and murdered recently, and these two men are concerned in the case. It has just occurred to me that these tickets may represent some of the swag. I would like to keep them in my possession long enough to investigate the pledges, captain."

"You may do so, Old King Brady; but I would like to have them back when you get through using them."

"Thank you, sir. I'll return them."

The prisoners glanced at each other, silently, and there was a grim look of despair plainly shown upon their faces.

They were led back to the cells, the detectives' handcuffs were taken off their wrists and the Bradys departed after securing Miss Berchowsky's promise to appear against the two crooks in court on the following day.

"We've made a beginning at breaking up Captain Jack's gang of crooks, anyway," remarked Old King Brady, as the pair started for home. "Both Evans and Jones are members of that band of ruffians."

"When the newspapers to-morrow morning give an account of the arrest," added Harry, "the rest of the gang will be apprised of the fate of these two men and they will doubtless hire a lawyer to defend them."

"More than likely. But with such strong evidence as we have against them there will be no escape for the rogues," answered Old King Brady, as he took a fresh chew of tobacco.

Next day the detectives were promptly in court when the cases of Evans and Jones were called.

The evidence of all the witnesses was taken, during the preliminary examination, and they were indicted to go before the grand jury for trial on a charge of burglary in the first degree.

Remanded to the Tombs, without bail, the two crooks were safely secured until such time as the Bradys might need them again to find out what they might know about the John Street mystery.

Satisfied with what they had done, the Bradys took the pawn tickets down to the Bowery loan office which had issued them a few days previously.

It was a handsomely appointed place, several stylish Jews were behind the polished oak counter, and Old King Brady asked one of them for Mr. Simpson, the proprietor.

A well-dressed man approached them and recognized the pair.

"Ah!" said he, smilingly. "The Bradys."

"How are you, Mr. Simpson?" answered Harry. "Can we have a few minutes' private conversation with you?"

"Certainly. Come into my office."

He opened a gate and they passed inside.

When they were in the private office, Harry said, as he produced the pawn tickets:

"We just arrested the two crooks who had these in their possession, and we are strongly of the belief that the jewels they represent are part of a big downtown robbery."

The pawnbroker scowled.

He apprehended the loss of money advanced on stolen property, and felt far from pleasant over the prospect.

"You want to see the things, I suppose?" he asked.

"We do," replied the boy, nodding. "It will be far pleasanter for us to settle this matter quietly between ourselves than it would be for us to get out a writ of replevin and compel you legally to produce them in court."

CHAPTER VII.

RALPH DENTON MAKES HIS APPEARANCE.

The pawnbroker realized that the Bradys would have no trifling about the matter, and he reflected a few moments and then said:

"It's no use to kick against the police, for they are sure to get the best of me in the end, anyhow."

"You are wise," assented Harry, drily.

"The easiest way is the best way," Simpson went on. "If we go to law, it is going to cost me money, anyway. I'll show you the things. If they are stolen, why, all I can ask of you is to try to catch Evans and Jones and try to recover the amount I advanced them on these jewels."

"We've got them both in jail now," said the boy, "and each one had double the amount of money you advanced them, when they were searched in the police station."

"Then I'm safe," said the pawnbroker, in relieved tones as a smile chased the gloomy look from his face. "Should you seize the jewels, I'll get out an attachment against the money they left with the police captain to reimburse myself. I, therefore, won't lose much beyond the legal fees and the interest I might have got for the loan."

That straightened out the matter to his entire satis-

faction, and he called in a clerk and told him to produce the pledges.

Harry drew out his note-book.

The boy had an account of the jewels written in it, and when the clerk brought in the pledges the Bradys carefully examined them and looked at the numbers stamped on them.

Eight were huge diamond sunbursts, and two were lace pins.

They were worth at least \$500 apiece, but the pawnbroker had advanced each of the crooks one thousand dollars apiece on the jewelry.

With magnifying glasses the officers found stamped on each article a tiny number. These numbers were from 32 to 41, with a small x on each side.

Harry searched through his book and finally found this entry:

"Twenty diamond sunbursts, numbered from 30 to 50."

The weights and values followed.

By means of this key the boy quickly discovered that the jewels before them were part of the proceeds of the robbery of the safe in Mr. Fox's office, and he said:

"Mr. Simpson, they are part of the swag. See these entries."

The pawnbroker glanced at the numbers and sighed.

"You are right," he assented. "Going to take them now?"

"No. We have always found you to be a gentleman and we are going to give you every chance in the world to save your money. We'll leave the jewelry with you until you are secured. How does that suit you?"

"Gentlemen, I appreciate your generosity."

The Bradys then left him.

After lunch they went up Lexington Avenue to Sadie Fox's house.

The girl met them in the parlor, clad in deep mourning.

"I am glad to see you," she said to them, pleasantly.

"Have you found out yet who killed my father?"

"Not yet," replied Harry, "but we have discovered about five thousand dollars' worth of the jewelry stolen from his safe. It may ultimately lead us to the villain who made away with him, and we hope it may serve as a clew to the recovery of the rest of the stolen property."

"I hope it will," said the girl, earnestly.

"How are you making out about your father's business?" asked Harry, curiously.

"I've got it going again."

"Who is running it for you?"

"A gentleman who has my confidence."

"Then he is making it pay you?"

"Handsomely. But I will soon be relieved of the anxiety of trying to carry on that business."

"In what way, Miss Fox?"

"I'm going to get married."

"To whom?"

"Mr. Denton."

"Then he came back from Denver?"

"Several days ago."

"When are you going to get married?"

"In one year. When I am out of mourning."

"And you expect him to relieve you of the business?"

"Yes. I intend to ask him to take charge of it."

"At once?"

"Well, in a short time."

"I hope the gentleman will prove worthy of you."

"Thank you, Mr. Brady, he will. My poor father was sadly mistaken in his estimate of the man. Ralph is a good fellow and he fairly idolizes me—but what brings you here to-day?"

"We had the river dragged in hopes of finding the missing head from your father's body," returned Harry, "but an entire lack of success compelled us to give up the search."

"Then there is no hope of recovering it?"

"Not unless it is cast up by the tide."

"You came here to tell me this?"

"We did."

"Then I must abandon all hope of recovering it?"

"We think so."

Just then there came a ring at the front door-bell, and a minute later the servant came in with a young man and said:

"Mr. Ralph Denton."

She departed, and the detectives glanced curiously at the new arrival.

He was of medium size, slenderly built and wore a stylish, dark-blue suit, patent leather shoes, and tan-colored gloves.

Denton had a clean-shaven face, with a bluish tinge where his beard should have been, a pair of keen, dark eyes were sunk on each side of an aquiline nose, and his hair was cut short.

He was a dashing, good-looking fellow, of polished politeness and was apparently a person of refinement.

With a bow to the Bradys, he showed his even white teeth in a smile at the girl, and said, in low, even tones:

"Sadie, I am pleased to see you. I hope I am not intruding."

"Oh, Ralph!" said the girl, with a blush, "I am so glad you have called. Permit me to introduce you to Old and Young King Brady. These gentlemen are Secret Service detectives."

"How do you do, gentlemen?" said Denton, pleasantly, as he shook hands with the officers. "I hope your call here does not indicate any further trouble for Miss Fox?"

"On the contrary," replied Old King Brady, "we have just brought her the agreeable news that we have recovered some of the jewelry stolen from her father before he was killed."

Ralph Denton gave a start and frowned.

The subject was evidently disagreeable to him.

After a moment's reflection, he asked, rather abruptly:

"Where did you get the jewels?"

"At a Bowery pawnbroker's," replied Harry.

"And the party who pawned them?"

"Two thieves, whom we have in jail."

"Indeed! And who are they?"

"Skin Evans and Big Bill Jones."

"What!" fairly shouted Denton, with a startled look.

The Bradys were amazed at the man's evident agitation over his receipt of this information, and they gazed at him keenly.

He was glaring at them with an ugly scowl.

Old King Brady caught his glance sternly, and demanded:

"Mr. Denton, of what interest is it to you that we have those two particular crooks, I'd like to know?"

The young man colored and looked confused.

Finally he answered, in tones of assumed carelessness:

"No interest whatever so far as those particular individuals are concerned. But I am glad to learn that at least some of Miss Fox's property has been recovered."

Old King Brady was not satisfied with this explanation, for the man's agitation was aroused by the persons arrested.

He instantly became suspicious of Denton.

"See here, sir," said he, pointedly, "to say the least, your excitement over the arrest of those two men was remarkable. Are you acquainted with them?"

"No. That's a preposterous question. How could I know such low scoundrels, more particularly as I've only just returned from the West?" said Denton, coolly.

"You acted as if they were friends of yours and as if you were horrified over their arrest."

"My dear fellow, your imagination is running away with you," said Denton, pityingly.

"Oh, no, it isn't. We deal with cold facts," bluntly said the old detective. "And mark you, sir, we won't forget this curious incident in a hurry. Good afternoon."

And the Bradys bowed and left the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PECULIAR ACTIONS OF MR. DENTON.

"Harry," said Old King Brady, when they reached the street, "I am of the opinion that Ralph Denton is not only acquainted with Evans and Jones, but that he was alarmed about their arrest."

"His actions betrayed that fact plainly enough," said the boy, gravely. "I was watching him closely, and I observed the deep agitation he showed when we told how we arrested the crooks."

"Considering how suspicious that fact is," said Old King Brady, with a thoughtful frown, "don't you think it would be a good thing for you and I to shadow that gentleman from the West and find out of what his interest in those crooks consists?"

"We had better do so at once, then," replied the boy, "for we know where he is now and can easily get on his track by waiting around here until he comes out of Sadie Fox's house."

"Get around the corner there and we will carry out

your suggestion," said the old detective, briskly. "There's no time like the present. We must strike while the iron is hot. If Denton is not what he pretends to be we should know it as soon as possible, to put Sadie Fox on her guard against him."

They went around into Twenty-eighth Street.

Here they lurked for several hours.

It was after dark before Denton came out, and they saw him cross over and walk rapidly toward Third Avenue.

He passed within a few feet of the detectives who were hiding in a hallway, and after he was some distance off they glided from their covert and pursued him.

In the hall the detectives had changed their appearance by assuming disguises they wore under their ordinary costumes. They now appeared to be a couple of naval officers, and the false hair they wore on their heads and faces completely concealed their identity.

Denton soon reached Third Avenue.

Here he boarded a car going downtown, riding on a front seat.

The Bradys ran after the car and caught it on the next corner, where it stopped to let a passenger alight.

Getting on the rear platform they were carried along with the man they were shadowing, until they reached Hester Street.

Denton got off the car and walked swiftly westward.

The detectives were after him in a twinkling, on the other side of the street, and he did not seem to notice them.

Four blocks were traversed and he paused on the corner of Baxter Street.

They were then in one of the most dangerous localities in New York.

It was a district made up of Jews, negroes, Chinamen, Italians and Syrians of the lowest type.

Dimly illuminated, lined with dilapidated old rookeries, reeking with filth and peopled with ruffians, the neighborhood was of such evil repute that honest men seldom ventured there at night.

Fights, murders and other crimes were of daily occurrence.

Despite this fact, Denton, richly and stylishly clad, was going up Baxter Street, exposing a heavy gold watch chain, a flashing diamond stud and a magnificent diamond ring.

He seemed to be careless of his surroundings.

The detectives followed, amazed at his audacity, and wondering what business could bring him to such a vile neighborhood.

"He's a mysterious man," Harry muttered.

"There must be a reason for his absence of fear."

"What do you attribute it to?"

"Familiarity with his surroundings, of course."

Just then Denton passed in the light of a street lamp and the puller-in of a cheap clothing store pounced on him.

There were few words passed.

Denton struck the capper with his fist, knocking him down, and strode on without taking the trouble to look back at the man.

"Cool," laughed Old King Brady.

"He's ready-witted enough."

"Where in thunder can he be going?"

"Nowhere decent, that's a cinch."

Just then two ruffians skulking in a doorway saw the flash of Denton's jewels, and crouched back in the gloom.

When he arrived opposite them, like ferocious beasts of prey they leaped out at him, and he sprang back and laughed.

One of these brutes had a sandbag upraised to knock Denton's brains out, but the man said something to them, and the pair slunk away like a couple of whipped dogs.

The amazement of the detectives increased.

"He's fearless," Old King Brady commented.

"Those men obey him, all right," added Harry, significantly.

"See where he is going now—into the Red Light."

The old detective referred to a resort in an old wooden shanty with a peaked roof and dormer windows.

Some of the worst crooks in Gotham hung out in that place, and the Bradys were perfectly aware of that fact.

"Such a den of infamy for a man like him to enter!" the old detective could not help exclaiming. "What does it mean?"

"Shall we follow him in?"

"We ain't rigged right for that den."

"There's no time now to change our looks."

"We'll have a fight before we get out of there, then."

"That don't worry me any, Old King Brady."

"Come along, then. I can stand it if you can."

They passed through the door, went around a green screen and found themselves in the midst of a dense cloud of smoke.

Through this pall they could distinguish the spectral figures of men moving about and lounging at tables.

Most of them were gambling, and curses and blows were of frequent occurrence when one crook got the other's money.

It took the blinking detectives a few minutes to get used to the dense smoke and distinguish anything definite.

The sight was anything but pleasant.

Half a dozen ruffians were around them in an instant, under the impression that they were a couple of naval Jackies ashore for a spree, and with pockets filled with money.

A scarred-face villain, with an evil face, patted Harry on the back with one hand, tried to lift out his watch with the other, and cried, in jocular tones:

"Well, well, well! If here ain't my old friend Bob from the navy. How are you, old messmate? Come and have a——"

Smack! went Harry's hand against his jaw, interrupting him.

He fell back, and the young detective cried, angrily:

"The next time you try to pinch a ticker, don't go so clumsy about it. Who else wants a smack in the jaw?"

"He's a fly duck," growled one of the others, and the rest fell back.

The scarred-faced man arose, rubbed his face ruefully a

few moments and suddenly rushed away into the fog of smoke.

He had quite enough of Young King Brady.

They were looking for Ralph Denton, and wondering why he came into this horrible den.

When they reached the rear of the room they saw him speaking to several very tough-looking citizens.

But when the detectives drew nearer to them, with the hope of eavesdropping, Denton and the four thugs dropped their voices to a whisper.

"Do you recognize his companions?" asked Harry, in low tones.

"I ought to," responded Old King Brady, grimly. "I've had the pleasure of arresting every one of them at some period of their careers. There's Buck Murray, Wash Kerryman, Yank Pugsley and Jim Friday. Every one of them are noted thieves of various types, and I doubt if there are four more desperate men in the world."

"Denton seems to be on very friendly terms with them."

"Too friendly for one pretending to be a decent man."

"Let's watch them."

They sunk into a seat and the four crooks kept on talking for a while longer, and then they heard Denton say:

"Be careful now!"

"Depend on us," replied Murray.

Denton thereupon arose and left the place.

"Follow him!" whispered Old King Brady.

"What are you going to do?"

"Remain and shadow these crooks."

"They must be up to mischief."

"Just what I suspect."

Away glided Harry, and he soon disappeared in the smoke.

Old King Brady remained behind to watch the four men, for he recognized them as some of Captain Jack's gang, and meant to arrest them at the first opportunity.

Harry soon caught view of Denton.

The boy tracked him to Union Square and saw him loitering outside of one of the theatres.

In a few minutes two elegantly dressed elderly ladies came out and Denton bowed and accosted them.

They seemed to know him.

A moment later he went away with them, and Young King Brady followed the trio.

CHAPTER IX.

ATTACKED BY THUGS.

Ralph Denton and the two jewel-bedecked old ladies boarded a Madison avenue car and rode uptown.

Harry was in the same car, keenly watching them and listening to the animated conversation they were carrying on.

"I am glad we are stopping at the same boarding house with you," one of the ladies was saying to Denton. "It

was so kind of you to-day to offer to meet us after the show was over and escort us home."

"My only regret, Mrs. Smith," gallantly replied Denton, "was that my private business precluded the possibility of my going to the theatre with you early in the evening. The best I could do under the circumstances, therefore, was to proffer my escort for you back home when you left the theatre."

"The worst of being a widow," laughed the other lady, "is that one must rely upon the kind attentions of one's friends in a case of this kind. I am sure Mrs. Smith and I are grateful to you."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Brown," said Denton, beseechingly. "It is always a pleasure to me to be of service to my lady friends."

"Here we are at the tunnel already."

"Don't fail to stop the car at the Thirty-eighth Street station, Mr. Denton."

"I'll look out for that, as it is our nearest way home, Mrs. Brown."

"Thank you, very much."

By this time the car had gone rushing into the underground passage and Denton signalled to the conductor, who sharply rang his bell, and the car slackened speed.

At the station the car paused.

Denton and his two lady friends alighted.

In order to avoid being seen, Harry let the car start and pass the stone stairway ere he moved to get off.

He then retraced his course.

When he reached the foot of the winding stairs and peered up, a startling scene met his view.

The two ladies had gone ahead of Denton, and were half way up the stairs, when four rough looking men suddenly came down.

Each one had a black mask on his face.

The two old ladies saw them, and paused.

Startled cries escaped them.

The foremost man of the group now darted forward, gripped Mrs. Smith by the throat, and cried to his companions:

"Nail the other before any one comes."

Another man flung his arms around Mrs. Brown's neck, stifling a scream that rose to her lips, and roared at the remaining two:

"Grab their purses and jewelry!"

The remaining ruffians were not slow to obey this order,

As each one pounced on a struggling woman, Mrs. Smith managed to cry in tones of great alarm:

"Mr. Denton! Save me!"

But a panic seemed to have overwhelmed Mr. Denton. He rushed back into the tunnel.

Just then Harry came running toward him.

The boy carried a revolver in his hand, and Mr. Denton saw it.

He may have feared being mistaken for one of the thieves.

At any rate, he dashed away in the opposite direction.

At the same moment Harry reached the foot of the stairs his partner appeared at the head of them.

He, too, grasped a pistol.

The boy now recognized the four assailants of the two ladies as the same crooks Denton had been with in the Five Points den. Old King Brady in following them had been led to the same spot Harry had gone to.

The detectives had the crooks hemmed in between them, and when the Bradys saw each other they were startled.

They covered the crooks with their weapons.

"Release those ladies!" Harry yelled at them.

Startled, the crooks complied, and their victims rushed down the stairs.

"Help! Help!" they shrieked wildly.

The hands of the highwaymen flew to their pockets for weapons.

Old King Brady observed this move, and he shouted sternly:

"Draw a gun and we'll shoot!"

"Fight for your lives, boys!" hissed Murray.

Seeing that they did not intend to obey, the detectives opened fire on the crooks, aiming so as not to kill.

Yells of pain came from Kerryman and Friday, both of whom had been hit in the legs by the flying bullets.

The gang separated.

Buck and Wash dashed up at Old King Brady, and Yank and Jim went flying down at Harry.

Bang! Bang! went two shots.

The bullets whizzed past the detectives' heads, and Old King Brady shouted:

"Stop, or we'll kill you!"

"I'll teach you to interfere with us!" yelled Murray.

Seeing that the men were reckless from desperation, the Bradys rushed at them, and the two parties met.

It was a dangerous fight at short range.

But the detectives had their own way of doing these things, and their first care was to disarm their men.

Harry's fist landed on Jim's arm.

The blow paralyzed it.

Down dropped the pistol from the crook's nerveless fingers, and an upper cut from Harry's fist caught Jim on the chin and knocked him over on the track.

Yank rushed up to the boy, and pressed his pistol at Harry's head.

"Blast yer!" he yelled, "I'll kill yer!"

Before he had a chance to fire Old King Brady saw what he was going to do, and shot him in the hand.

With a yell of pain, Yank leaped down the stairs into the tunnel, and the other two men attacked Old King Brady.

Just then a car came rumbling along.

The four crooks evidently lost all hope of robbing the two ladies, for Buck and Wash dashed down into the tunnel.

"Board the car!" roared the former.

They sprang upon the side step.

Leveling their pistols at the Bradys, who were about to follow, they fired several shots at them.

"Under cover!" gasped Harry, as he saw what they were going to do. "It's foolhardy to expose ourselves."

The vicious bullets began to buzz around them like bees just as they plunged into the protecting shelter of the stairway.

Luckily they were not hit.

The conductor was going to stop the car, when Buck aimed his revolver at the man, and shouted angrily:

"Keep her going if you don't want to get hurt!"

The man promptly dropped the bell rope.

Several passengers were in the car, and they rapidly dodged down behind the backs of their seats when they saw the firearms as they feared to get hit.

Away sped the car furiously toward the 42d street end of the tunnel, and the crooks pulled off their masks, put their pistols in their pockets, and Murray growled:

"Jump off at the Grand Central Depot when she turns, and we will give them the slip at the station."

The rest nodded.

Both the conductor and motorman were so scared that they would have called the first policeman they saw, had not the memory of the pistols in the pockets of the crooks remained in their minds.

When the car reached the Grand Central, the four suddenly alighted, dodged into the building, and disappeared.

The car went on.

Meantime the Bradys had seen that it was not possible to catch the crooks, and turned their attention to the two ladies.

Both were badly frightened, and grateful to the detectives.

"Did they rob you?" Harry asked Mrs. Smith.

"No," she replied. "You arrived in time to prevent them."

"What has become of your escort?"

"Mr. Denton? Oh, the coward ran away and left us to our fate."

"Permit us to see you safely home?"

"Thanks! We would be glad to have you!"

The Bradys brought them up out of the tunnel, and left them at the door of their boarding house.

Just then Denton came along.

There was a sheepish look on his face when he saw the detectives, for he recognized them as the ones who saved the ladies from the thieves.

"You were a pretty coward, to run away and leave those ladies to their fate," said Harry contemptuously.

"Well, I didn't want to get shot," he replied.

"And you certainly saved your hide."

"Did you bring the ladies home?"

"Yes."

"I'm obliged to you."

As he said this he attempted to pass them to go in the house.

But Harry grasped his arm and stopped him.

"Hold on, there," said the boy. "We have got something serious to say to you, Ralph Denton."

CHAPTER X.

ACCUSING DENTON.

A slight pallor mounted the young man's face, and he paused, hesitatingly eyed Harry keenly a moment, and asked:

"What do you want?"

"Do you recognize me?" asked Harry.

He took off his disguise.

Denton peered at him a moment, and then asked in startled tones:

"Ain't you Young King Brady?"

"Yes."

"And this man?"

"Is my partner."

"You were disguised?"

"We were, just to watch you."

"To watch me?"

"Yes, sir. We shadowed you after you left Miss Fox's house."

"For what?"

"We are suspicious of you."

"Nonsense!"

"You betrayed deep concern over the arrest of Evans and Jones."

"Oh, you are mistaken, Mr. Brady."

"If that fact was suspicious, it was nothing in comparison with the suspicion your later actions aroused in us."

"To what are you referring to now?"

"When you left Miss Fox you went into one of the worst dens in New York, near the Five Points. We saw you there holding a confidential talk with Buck Murray, Wash Kerryman, Yank Pugsley and Jim Friday. They are the most notorious flim-flam men in the city. You parted with them, and went to the theatre, where you got two ladies laden with jewelry. I trailed you. My partner tracked the four crooks. You know how you and the two crooks met them in the tunnel. It was to all intents and purposes a put-up job. We believe you told those crooks you would be at the 38th street station in the tunnel at a certain hour. You were to leave the ladies in their power to be robbed; but we spoiled your little game."

"What!" shouted Denton, in seeming indignation. "Me a capper for guns? Say, what do you take me for, anyway?"

Harry smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"A crook," he exclaimed coolly.

"How dare you say that?" excitedly demanded Denton.

"Posing as a gentleman, you seem to be a crook on the quiet," asserted the boy. "Your actions prove it."

"I'm a decent, respectable man, I'll have you to understand."

"That's all rot."

"I defy you to prove that I ain't."

"Well, I'll accept the challenge."

"Go ahead, then."

"How do you account for being on such intimate terms with those thieves?" demanded the boy.

"I haven't got to account to you for my actions!" haughtily answered Denton. "It's none of your con-founded business what I do. You are simply trying to trump up a case against me, and I ain't going to stand for it—see?"

"Your doings may interest Miss Fox."

"See here," shouted Denton wildly; "don't you dare to go and tell that young lady anything about my private business, or, by heavens, I'll make it hot for you!"

"If you are a crook she ought to be put on her guard against you," said Harry.

"Brady," exclaimed Denton, who was now as pale as death, "if you blackmail me I'll sue you for damages—I'll have you broke—I'll shoot you!"

"Hush! Don't talk like a fool," replied the boy. "In the discharge of our duty we are empowered to do almost anything. Should we discover that you are a capper for those crooks you'll wake up some fine morning and find yourself in jail."

The man glared angrily at the boy for a moment.

By a mighty effort he controlled his agitation.

A cold, sneering smile began to creep over his face, and he said, in low, sarcastic tones:

"I'm not going to quarrel with you, for I might hurt your feelings. It's pretty evident you think I'm an angel. But I'll tell you this very frankly: If I catch you interfering with me, I'll fill your carcasses so full of lead that you'll look like a sieve."

This threat was accompanied by a shake of his finger, and a dark look left no doubt of his sincerity.

Harry laughed at him.

"You've had your warning," said the boy. "Now, look out!"

Denton ran up the front stoop, and paused at the top.

"I see there's going to be war between us," said he; "and I'll bet you'll get the worst end of it before you get through."

He thereupon passed into the house.

The Bradys walked away laughing, and the old detective said:

"You've made him uneasy, Harry."

"It's just as well to worry him. It may make him show his hand," replied the boy.

Then they went home.

Next day they called on Sadie Fox.

The servant met him at the door, and said:

"My mistress has gone away."

"Where to?" queried the boy.

"The country."

"What place?"

"I don't know, sir."

"When will she return?"

"She didn't say."

"Did she go alone?"

"No, sir. Mr. Denton went with her."

The Bradys smiled, and gazed at each other.

They realized that Denton feared the effect of what they might tell the girl about his peculiar actions.

Finding they could not do anything there they departed.

"He has outwitted us," laughed Harry.

"Only temporarily," replied Old King Brady.

"That man is not straight, just as old Mr. Fox thought."

"Just my opinion, Harry. He gave himself away."

"The girl should be warned ere she marries him."

"Plenty of time for that. She won't marry him until she is out of mourning for her father."

"Can't tell. He may prevail upon her to do so."

"That depends upon how much influence he has over her."

"Well, we'll try to put her on her guard."

They went down to headquarters and had a talk with the chief, who quite agreed with their estimate of Denton.

At nightfall they called at a noted den in Bleeker street.

It was a resort for all kinds of crooks.

Ostensibly the place was a French restaurant, but the detectives knew that the rooms downstairs were used by some of the worst crooks as a gambling den.

Passing through the restaurant, they went down a flight of stairs into the cellar.

It was a low place, fitted up with card tables at which some games of poker were being played.

A gang of crooks were shooting craps in a corner, and at a faro table some ruffians were staking various sums of money.

The place was poorly lit, and as the Bradys were clothed in rough garments, wigs, and had their faces smudged with soot, they looked as disreputable as any one in the den.

A glance around the cellar showed the Bradys a number of well-known crooks, and among them they saw Murray and Kerryman at the faro table.

Just as the detectives strode over to seize them, they saw the pair leave the table, and heard Buck growl:

"I'm busted."

"So am I," added Wash.

"Got to make a raise."

"How?"

"Come and I'll show you."

They passed the Bradys, and hastily left the den.

"Don't touch them yet," Old King Brady whispered to the boy detective. "We must find a better place than this to nail them. If we attempted it here, the whole shooting match in the place would take their part, and we'd have more than we could attend to."

"Hurry after them, then."

Out they went, and a moment later they caught view of the two crooks hurrying down the street.

They paused on the corner, and the detectives glided behind a baker's wagon standing near, and heard Buck say:

"I'll tell you the game I'm up to in order to raise some money, Wash; but I want you to help me."

"I'm so desperate I'd do anything for a few bones, Buck," replied the other villain.

CHAPTER XI.

TOLD BY THE TELEPHONE.

Thinking the two crooks were going to disclose the plot they intended to work on some unfortunate victim, the Bradys listened intently.

They could hear Murray saying:

"Where's a public telephone?"

"Down the street in that cigar store. Why?"

"I've got to use it."

"Who do you want to call up, Buck?"

"Anderson's drug store."

"For what?"

"To see if Anderson has got any money."

"Say, you'll get me all balled up in a minute. Explain."

"You come with me, Wash, and you'll get onto my graft."

They started for the store.

Old King Brady nudged Harry and whispered:

"Run ahead and hide in the store ahead of them!"

"I understand," replied the boy and away he ran.

Reaching the store, he found the door open, glided in, and got under the counter without being seen by the proprietor who was in the back room.

A few moments later the two crooks came in.

Hearing them, the tobacconist stuck his head out of the back door.

"Well?" he demanded.

"Telephone," replied Buck.

"Over in the corner."

"Here's the money. City call."

The cigar dealer took the silver, and Buck sat down at the 'phone, glanced in the book, and took the receiver off the hook.

"Give me 51-Eighteenth, Central!" he called.

Presently some one called:

"Hello!"

"Anderson's drug store?" asked Buck.

"Yes. Who is that?"

"Doctor Merritt."

"Indeed! I didn't recognize your voice. How are you?"

"First rate, Anderson, first rate."

"Anything I can do for you, doctor?"

"Yes; I'd like to ask a favor."

"What is it?"

"I've got to have one hundred dollars before banking hours in the morning. Will you cash a check for me?"

"Certainly. Fetch it around."

"Can't; I've got a patient here; but I can send it to you by my man John. He's quite trustworthy. You have only to put the money in an envelope, and give it to him with orders to be careful not to lose it."

"Very well, doctor. Send him along."

"He'll be there in quarter of an hour."

"I'll have the money ready."

"For your kindness I'll send you a nice remembrance from——"

"Oh, never mind about that, doctor."

"Well, we'll see, we'll see. Good-by, and many thanks."

Murray rang off.

Wash had been an interested listener.

A grin overspread his ugly face, and he said:

"Quite a graft."

"He bit."

"Will he do it?"

"Yes."

"Good enough."

"I've got a blank check and stylographic pen in my pocket. I'll make out a check and you carry it to him."

"Very well."

They left the store, and as the owner had gone back in his apartments behind the partition, Harry crept out.

He saw the villains go into a saloon on the corner.

Old King Brady met the boy.

"Well?" he asked eagerly.

"I've found out what they are planning," replied Harry, and he told his partner all that was said.

Leaving Old King Brady to watch them, he entered the store, found the name of Druggist Anderson in the telephone book, and rang him up at once.

"Anderson?" he asked.

"Yes. Who's that?"

"The Bradys—detectives."

"Well?"

"You are going to be robbed."

"By whom?"

"I'll tell you. A few moments ago a crook named Murray called you up and said he was Doctor Merritt."

"The deuce!"

"Wanted you to cash a one hundred dollar check, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, have a cop ready to grab the man 'John' when he comes in. His real name is Wash Kerryman."

"Good Lord!"

"The check he will bring is a rank forgery."

"Are you joking?"

"No. Ring up Doctor Merritt. He will tell you that he did not ask you to cash a check."

"Then I'm to have the messenger arrested?"

"Yes. He's a fraud. I'll call to see you at once."

"Thank you for posting me."

Harry rang off and joined his partner.

Telling him all that passed, he asked:

"Have they emerged from that saloon yet, Old King Brady?"

"No. More than likely they are forging the check, Harry."

"Shall we scoop them in before they try to pass the check?"

"By no means. Let them run right into a trap."

They watched and waited.

Presently Buck and his pal emerged from the saloon, and going off at a brisk pace toward 3d avenue, they came

in sight of the colored lights in the window of a drug store.

The detectives followed them.

They saw Buck hand his pal a check, and Wash went into the store while his partner took up a position close to the door.

Going into the store brazenly, Buck's pal strode over to the counter and accosted a bearded man with spectacles.

"Mr. Anderson?"

"That's my name."

"I'm John, from Doctor Merritt's."

"Got the check?"

"Here it is, sir."

Wash handed it over, and Mr. Anderson seized him by the wrist.

Clinging to the startled villain, the druggist yelled:

"Officer! Come—quick!"

Out from behind the prescription counter rushed a policeman with a club in his hand, and seized Wash by the collar.

Raising his club, he roared threateningly:

"If yer budge an inch I'll welt you on ther head wid me club."

"Buck!" yelled the unlucky Wash. "Run!"

Peering through the window, Buck saw what a predicament his partner was in.

"Defeated!" he gasped.

Then he started to run away, but rushed straight into the arms of the Bradys, who seized him.

"Let me go!" he yelled, struggling to get free.

"No, sir. You are our prisoner," coolly answered Harry.

"Your prisoner?"

"See here!" said the boy, showing his badge.

Buck gave a roar of alarm.

"Fly coppers!" he cried.

"The Bradys, if you please," Harry said, as he slipped a pair of handcuffs over the man's wrists.

"Hang on to him, Harry," said Old King Brady.

And he darted into the store.

Wash had torn himself free from the policeman's grip, and pulling the club from his hand he gave the officer a blow that sent him reeling unconscious to the floor.

Filled with alarm at this unexpected turn of affairs, the druggist darted behind the prescription partition.

Seeing how matters stood, Old King Brady rushed fearlessly at the desperate crook, and shouted:

"Drop that club, or I'll drop you, Wash!"

The villain glared at him.

A pistol was staring him in the face.

But it did not alarm the desperate man, for he pulled a revolver out of his hip pocket, and yelled:

"You get out of here, or you'll get hurt!"

Instead of obeying, Old King Brady rushed right at him.

Bang! went Kerryman's revolver.

A smothered cry of pain escaped Old King Brady, and he flung up his arms and fell to the floor, gasping:

"I'm shot!"

CHAPTER XII.

FOOLING THE PAWNBROKER.

Harry had seen what happened to his partner. It brought a dangerous gleam to his eyes, and an angry pallor to his cheeks.

Raising his pistol, he took deliberate aim at Wash, and fired through the doorway.

The boy was a dead shot.

His bullet hit the crook, and made him yell.

Wash fell to his knees, crying frantically:

"I'm done for now!"

Over to him rushed the young detective, dragging Buck along.

"Surrender, confound you!" he cried sternly.

"Oh, I'll give in!" groaned Wash, in feeble tones.

Harry fastened a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

"You are my prisoner, Wash," he exclaimed.

The pistol shots brought a crowd swarming around.

Mr. Anderson began applying restoratives to Old King Brady, who had by this time recovered consciousness.

"What has happened?" he asked, in dazed tones.

"You were shot," replied the druggist.

"Oh, yes; now I remember."

"The ball glanced off your skull, by good luck."

"Indeed!"

"It merely inflicted a scalp wound."

"And knocked me senseless?"

"Exactly. I've washed and plastered the wound."

"Do I need a doctor?"

"I think not."

Old King Brady got upon his feet.

He was very weak from the shock for a while.

Glancing around, he saw the two prisoners, and smiled.

"Got them, eh?" he asked Harry.

"Without much trouble," replied the boy.

"I'm glad of that."

"Are you the party who put me on my guard against these crooks?" asked Mr. Anderson of Young King Brady.

"We are," answered Harry, using the plural.

"I carried out your instructions."

"So I observe. By so doing you saved your money. You were certainly one of the easiest marks a crook ever stacked up against."

"This adventure has taught me a good lesson."

"Profit by it," said the boy.

Then they gripped their prisoners, and accompanied by the policeman they pushed through the crowd on the sidewalk, and led the two men away to the nearest police station.

After Wash receiving the care of a doctor, they were locked up, and the Bradys went out in the office to speak to the sergeant in charge.

"What did you find in their pockets?" Harry asked him.

The police sergeant enumerated a list of articles.

Among them were some pawn tickets.

Harry asked to see them.

They were handed over, and the Bradys carefully examined them.

One taken from Buck called for fifty pieces of jewelry, which had been pledged a few days previously.

The crook received two thousand dollars for them.

They had been pledged in Buck's name.

A smile crossed Harry's face, and he pointed at the pawnbroker's name printed on the ticket, and said:

"Mike Goldstein—the fence—in Elizabeth street."

"You suspect this jewelry may be some of that stolen from Mr. Fox, don't you?" asked Old King Brady.

"I certainly do. We must have a look at it."

"He won't show it to you."

"I'll trick him into doing so, and then seize it."

"How can you do so?"

Young King Brady disclosed his plan.

Receiving permission to keep the ticket, Harry said to the sergeant:

"We think it calls for some stolen jewels."

"I hope the ticket will aid you to get them, Harry."

"It's bound to."

Old King Brady had been thinking.

He finally came to a conclusion, and said to Harry:

"Isn't it odd that so many members of Captain Jack's gang have tickets for Mr. Fox's stolen jewels?"

"Very," the boy assented.

"Looks suspicious."

"It shows plainly that the members of the very gang we are running down were concerned in the robbery and disappearance of Tom Fox," replied Harry quietly.

"In that case, we can kill two birds with one stone."

"Well, I hope so."

"This gang must be on friendly terms with the foreign-looking man we saw going into Mr. Fox's building with the dagger."

"Moreover," added the boy, "Ralph Denton, being so intimate with the crook must also be ringing in with the gang. It's a complicated case, Old King Brady."

"We will unravel the mystery soon."

"Perhaps they, too, have pawn tickets."

"By arresting them we may find out."

Leaving the police station, the two detectives went home to make their preparations for the next day.

Late on the following day, the detectives carefully disguised themselves to appear as a couple of prosperous, middle-aged business men.

Going down to Grand street and crossing over to Elizabeth, they walked up the south side of the street.

In the middle of the block they paused before Goldstein's dingy little pawn office, and sized it up.

The windows were filled with an assortment of jewelry and miscellaneous objects common to such places.

It was a small, dirty-looking den, with drawn curtains, so no one could look inside from the street.

The detectives pushed the door open, and a bell rang.

They found themselves in a stuffy little office containing a counter, behind which were innumerable pigeon holes filled with bundles.

Behind a small desk at one end of the counter sat Goldstein.

He was a little old Jew, with a big hook nose, thin whiskers and a bald head, and he furtively sized up the Bradys, and demanded:

"Vat yer vant?"

"Are you Mr. Goldstein?" asked Harry.

"Yah. Dot ish mine name."

Harry handed him the ticket taken from Buck.

"Do you remember this loan?" asked the boy.

"Fer sure I do," replied Goldstein, eyeing Harry suspiciously. "Where yer got it? I didn't vhas loan you dot monish."

"I bought the ticket from a man named Murray."

"Oh," said the Jew. "I see."

"We are going to redeem that jewelry."

"Yah. Bud yer bay me mein inderest?"

"Certainly. How much is it?"

"Sixty tollar."

"But that's very dear——"

"Dose vhas mine rates yet alretty."

"Very well. Produce the stuff."

"Money frsht," said Goldstein, with a leer.

Harry pulled a big wad of bills from his pocket, counted out two thousand and sixty dollars, and the pawnbroker took the money.

Opening a safe, he took out a parcel.

"Here vhas dot shewlry," said he, handing it over.

Harry took the package and opened it.

Inside was an assortment of fine jewelry.

All the pieces were yet tagged and numbered.

Drawing out his book, Harry compared the jewels with his memoranda, and smiled, as he turned to his partner and said:

"More of the Fox swag."

"Sure of it?"

"Oh, yes."

"Swag?" asked Goldstein.

"Yes. These are stolen goods."

"How you know?"

"Because we are looking for them."

"Vell, I lose me noddings by dot."

"No?" asked Harry, putting the gems in his pocket.

"Yah! Dot ish so," grinned the pawnbroker.

"Don't be too sure about that."

"Vhy?"

"Because the money I gave you is counterfeit!"

A yell of consternation escaped the Jew.

He frantically grabbed up the money, glared at it, and his experienced eye showed him that the boy told the truth.

The money was all counterfeit.

When he again turned toward the detectives, he was horrified to find that they had left the store.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE TOILS.

The pawnbroker frantically rushed to the door, and seeing the two Bradys walking away, he dashed after them.

Rushing up behind the pair, he seized them by their arms.

"Bolice! Bolice!" he yelled wildly.

"Let go!" roared Old King Brady. "Are you insane?"

"Gief me mein shewlry beck!" screamed Goldstein.

"It is stolen property," replied Harry. "You would never have given it up if we had not duped you. Now that we have got hold of it, we intend to keep it, old fellow."

"I haf you arrested."

"Nonsense. We are officers ourselves."

"Dot don't make no tifference. I dell de gommissioners on you. Dot seddles id. You vhas von big tief!"

A crowd gathered round them.

Many were Jews.

Goldstein spoke to them appealingly.

He told them what the detectives had done.

It aroused the wrath of the crowd.

Threats were muttered, and curses yelled at the officers.

Suddenly one of the bolder ones hit Old King Brady.

That started a fight.

The old detective struck back.

Instantly the whole crowd jumped in.

A fierce fight ensued.

Beset by ten times their number, and making no effort to escape, the Bradys fought furiously.

Out shot their fists with the force of pile drivers, and every time they struck a man he went down.

It was a hot fight while it lasted.

But it did not last long.

Overcome by force of numbers, the detectives were finally knocked down, and in a moment each one had a dozen men at him.

During the fight Goldstein kept dancing around, yelling encouragement at his companions, and beseeching them to kill the Bradys.

Among their antagonists, the detectives recognized the faces of several well-known crooks.

The disguises of the detectives were finally knocked off, and their true identity revealed to Goldstein and the crooks.

Well knowing the Bradys, it made them wild.

Many a blow received by the officers was delivered in pure malice for the trouble they had put the crooks in.

"Helb me!" Goldstein yelled. "Pull dem into mein shtore. Dey robbed me. I must get me beck mein dings."

The crooks grabbed the struggling detectives.

Lifting the pair, they rushed them into Goldstein's place.

The door was banged shut to keep out the crowd.

"What have they got of yourn?" a well-known burglar demanded of the old Jew.

"Shewlry mit diamints," Goldstein answered.

"We'll git it."

He made a motion to his pals, and the package of stolen jewelry was taken from the detectives.

Before they could dispose of it, the door flew open, and a tall, thin man with a dark beard entered.

The Bradys instantly recognized him as the man whom they had traced to Mr. Fox's office at the time of his mysterious disappearance.

"Captain Jack!" cried one of the crooks, in startled tones.

The newcomer scowled at them, and then demanded sternly:

"What ees ze mattair here?"

"Dey vhas de Pradys!" exclaimed Goldstein.

The man looked startled.

"Fasten them!" he exclaimed hastily.

Unable to resist so many, the detectives had to submit to having their hands and feet bound.

When they were secured, they gazed curiously at Captain Jack.

The man returned their look with interest.

"So you are the man, eh?" Old King Brady observed.

"What man, monsieur?" demanded the newcomer.

"The one whom we followed to Tom Fox's office. The one who disappeared with him. It's curious you are the captain of a band of city outlaws, many of whom have pawn tickets for jewels stolen from Fox at the time you and he disappeared."

Captain Jack laughed in amused tones.

"Don't let eet puzzle you any longair," said he coolly, "for I explain ze whole mattair, eef you like."

"We wish you would."

"To begin, you chase me down to John street, you say?"

"Yes; from City Hall Park."

"And saw me go in Fox's office?"

"Exactly."

"You heard ze fight we had?"

"We did."

"And found Fox, ze jewelry and myself gone?"

"That's it exactly."

"What you suppose became of us?"

"Can't say."

"I tell you. We all went out ze window."

"Leading into the little courtyard?"

"Yes."

"First you robbed the safe?"

"I didn't do anything of ze kind."

"Who did?"

"One of my men."

"Where was he?"

"In ze building in ze rear."

"Well?"

"He open ze iron window shutters wiz ze aid of some of his pals. A plank was thrust from ze window they occupied to ze window of Fox's office. I carry Fox ovair

ze plank wiz ze aid of one of my men. Anothair seize ze jewelry. Hearing you coming, he left his job unfinished, and join us. Ze plank was hastily withdrawn, and ze iron shuttairs closed. We saw you through a small hole in ze shuttair. While you were all stewing ovair ze mattair we made our escape."

"Was Mr. Fox killed?"

"No."

"But he was murdered afterward."

"How you know?"

"We found his body in the river."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes; and a couple of your gang set it afloat."

"I'm sure I didn't kill him."

"We can't prove you did."

"Don't you know he went home aftair ze robbery?"

"Yes—dopy—from some drug you gave him."

"Very true," laughed Captain Jack. "We dose him so he would not remember anything about what happen."

"Then that accounts for his queer actions."

"Undoubtedly."

"Hadn't you a hand in his death?"

"No, indeed!"

"Do you know who did?"

"No, I don't. I don't know zat he ees dead."

"But we found his body in the river."

"Are you sure eet was his?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Simply because his own daughter identified it."

"Pretty good evidence, Monsieur."

"We think so."

Captain Jack now turned to his companions.

Pointing down at the Bradys, he said:

"Zese men are our sworn enemies. It ees to our interest to put zem where zey will nevair do us any harm again."

"Kill 'em!" growled one of the crooks.

"Ze authorities could hang us for zat."

"What's ter be did, then?"

"As zey seem to be insane, I'm going to put zem in an asylum. Zere zey will not only be properly restrained, but we will nevair be bothered wiz zem again. Call a coach, one of you. I'll attend to zeir case."

One of the men hurried out.

The detectives were then blindfolded and gagged.

When this was done the carriage arrived, and the officers were put in the vehicle with Captain Jack.

The driver was given directions.

Away dashed the carriage, and the detectives were left to wonder what their fate was to be.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIGHTING TO ESCAPE.

Stripped of their clothing, and clad in a miserable suit of blue jeans, the Bradys on the following day found

themselves the inmates of a private sanitarium on the outskirts of New York.

By liberally paying the unscrupulous doctor who owned the place, the villainous Captain Jack had easily secured the incarceration of his most implacable foes.

Locked in a huge corridor, upon which the bedrooms opened, the detectives were compelled to mingle with a dozen or more miserable lunatics, and were treated as two of them.

A burly keeper had charge of the ward.

Indignant at the position in which they were placed, Old King Brady on the following morning approached this man, and stopping him he said:

"Say! Do you know that we are sane men?"

"Of course yez are," assented the keeper to humor him.

"We are no more crazy than you are."

"Any one can see that, me boy," proceeded the keeper, who thought they were really crazy men.

"Do you know who we are?"

"I do not."

"We are the Bradys—two Secret Service detectives."

"Oh, yez are, hey?"

"Yes, and we want to get out of here."

"Oh, so yez shall, later on."

Old King Brady sized the man up in disgust.

He saw very plainly that the keeper thought he was a maniac, and was merely trying to humor what he supposed was a crazy whim.

"When the doctor who runs this establishment comes in," said he with dignity, "I want you to send him to me, do you hear?"

"All right, I will," replied the keeper, good naturedly. "Now, be good. Run over to ther window, an' amuse yer-self lookin' out."

And so saying he walked away.

The Bradys met, and Harry remarked:

"Can't find a means of escaping."

"Have you searched the whole place?"

"Yes. It's all very well guarded."

"We must get away, Harry."

"I don't see much chance."

"It may turn up."

"Evidently Captain Jack paid to have us kept here."

"No doubt about it."

They kept away from the drivelling idiots and raving maniacs, and toward noon saw the head doctor enter.

He examined some of the patients, and reached the Bradys.

"Are you the boss here?" asked Harry.

"I am. What do you want?"

"Our liberty."

"You won't get it."

"What right have you to keep us here against our wish?"

"My dear fellow, you and your friend are now lunatics. You are to be treated as such. It won't do you a particle of good to revolt. You can't possibly get away."

"What long chances of arrest you run."

"That's my business."

"Then we can get no encouragement from you?"

"None whatever."

"You may regret this."

"I may; but I doubt it. If you become refractory, we will lock you in cells, and beat you."

"That's a nice prospect."

"Behave, and you will have no trouble with me."

"Very well. We'll have to make the best of a bad bargain, I suppose," sighed Old King Brady, in resigned tones.

A smile of satisfaction crossed the doctor's face.

He thought he had them subdued already, and it pleased him.

Striding away, he examined some other patients.

The moment the Bradys were alone Harry said:

"It's useless for us to hope to get out of here by fair means."

"We'll have to force our way out, Harry."

"The keeper carries a bunch of keys, which pass him out of this department. We must get them."

"Wait till to-night."

"Going to tackle him?"

"Of course I am."

They remained very quiet all the rest of the day, but carefully laid their plans to escape from the asylum.

Night finally arrived.

At nine o'clock every one was in bed.

One hour later the Bradys arose and met.

Harry peered out the door into the corridor.

The night keeper, armed with a club, was sitting in a chair at the end of the hall dozing.

"If there's much noise," whispered Harry, "it will arouse all the patients, and there will be the deuce to pay."

"Then make all the noise you can."

"Why?"

"Because if the patients are aroused, and the keepers have to contend with them, it will give us more freedom to escape from here," replied Old King Brady.

Harry pondered.

He liked the idea.

"You are right," he muttered.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes. Go ahead; I'll follow."

They crept out into the hall like twin shadows.

Softly making their way toward the keeper, they crept close to the wall, and soon arrived within a few yards of him.

Unfortunately the creaking of a board in the floor under Harry's knee aroused him, and caused him to sit up.

He stared around.

As his glance fell upon the two creeping detectives he bounded to his feet, and rushed toward them.

"Who's that?" he roared.

"The jig is up, Harry."

"Tackle him together, Old King Brady."

Up they jumped, and made a wild rush for the man.

Old King Brady reached him first, and seizing him by

the lapels of his coat he suddenly pulled the coat down, as if he were going to strip it off the keeper's body.

Once it was off the man's shoulders, his arms were bound so he could not use them very well.

Bang! went Old King Brady's fist against his face, and the keeper gave a yell and fell down.

Down on him went Old King Brady, and in a moment he had the man's keys and revolver.

Harry seized the club.

Aroused by the man's yells, all the lunatics in the ward came flocking out into the corridor.

Their cries aroused the entire institution.

"Run for the door, Harry!" panted Old King Brady.

"Help! Help!" howled the keeper.

Together the Bradys dashed over to the door, and Harry began to fit the keys in the lock to unfasten it.

Seeing they were intent upon escaping, the keeper ran toward the pair, but Old King Brady brought him to a sudden halt by aiming the revolver at him, and shouting:

"Stand back, there, or I'll kill you!"

The man recoiled.

Just then Harry succeeded in opening the door.

"Come on!" he cried.

Out into a hall they rushed.

The doctor and some of his assistants were coming up the stairs, but the impetuous rush of the detectives carried them off their feet, and sent them tumbling down the steps again.

At the bottom of the stairs the Bradys leaped over the bodies of the swearing, struggling mass of humanity.

Ahead was a door.

"Stop, there!" yelled the doctor, frantically.

Bang! Bang! went the pistol, as Old King Brady fired over the doctor's head to scare him.

Just then the lunatics, finding the door open, came swarming from the corridor, and rushed downstairs.

Compelled to drive them back, the doctor and his keepers attacked and drove them up the stairs again.

Taking advantage of this diversion, the Bradys ran to the front door, opened it, and dashed into the garden.

The doctor's carriage stood at the door.

Into it leaped the Bradys.

Hurling the negro coachman out, they started the horse, and went tearing away just as the doctor and his keepers came running out the front door.

CHAPTER XV.

EXPOSING DENTON.

Inside of one hour the Bradys reached the city, and put the doctor's horse and carriage in a livery stable.

From there they went home and got rid of the miserable jean uniforms they had been compelled to wear.

Alone in their cosy apartments, they sat down to dis-

cuss all the events which had led up to the present state of affairs.

"We have thus far ascertained several facts beyond a doubt," said Harry. "Captain Jack, the leader of the gang of city bandits we are after, is identical with the Frenchman who caused Tom Fox to vanish from his John street office. He admitted it in Goldstein's."

"Not only that," said Old King Brady, "but the fact that we found pawn tickets for some of the missing jewelry in the possession of Evans, Jones, Murray and Kerryman proves conclusively that the jewelry was divided among the gang. Each one received his share. The crooks immediately pawned their booty to raise money. By gambling they as promptly lost all they gained."

"Goldstein got back the package we got from him by means of the counterfeit money," said Harry. "And as Captain Jack and some of his gang were in that Elizabeth street joint at the time, and aided Goldstein to recover the jewelry, it's plain they are friends of the old fence."

"Of course," assented Old King Brady. "The most curious feature about the whole case, however, is that Ralph Denton is on such friendly terms with that gang of crooks. We saw positive proof of this the night he so boldly defied and subdued the crooks around Five Points, and his subsequent intimacy with the four crooks puts him under my suspicion. We must notify Sadie Fox not to marry that man from Denver. Her poor old father's suspicions of Denton were correct. I'm sure he's a crook, or else he is in league with crooks."

"He was badly frightened when we threatened to tell the girl, and he threatened to kill us if we did, you may remember."

"So he did. But that won't deter me."

"I hope it won't. It would be a pity for such a nice girl to link her life with the kind of a scoundrel such as Denton proved himself to be when he lured those two ladies into the hands of the four thieves in the tunnel."

"Oh, we can prevent that; but what I would most like to do would be to find out how Tom Fox met his death in the river and lost his head."

"That may yet come to light. To-morrow we had better swear out a warrant for the doctor of the sanitarium where we were confined, and make him pay the penalty of being bribed by Captain Jack to hold us prisoners there under the pretext that we were a couple of lunatics."

The detectives finally retired.

On the following day they had Kerryman and Murray sent to the Tombs to join Jones and Evans.

The druggist whom they tried to swindle with the forged check appeared against the pair, and secured their conviction.

When the Bradys left the court, late in the afternoon, they proceeded straight to the residence of Sadie Fox.

She met them very graciously, and said:

"I was wondering what became of you."

"We called here, but learned that you had left the city," Harry answered. "You went off with Mr. Denton."

"Oh, I was going to visit some relatives in Buffalo, and he merely put me aboard the cars," she replied.

"You just got back?"

"Yesterday."

"Where is Denton now?"

"I expect him here at any moment."

"We would like to see the gentleman."

"Your wish will be granted," said the girl, pointing out the parlor window, "for here he comes now, Mr. Brady."

"His call was most opportune."

Just then Denton rang.

A servant ushered him in.

When he saw the Bradys a startled cry escaped him.

He recoiled a few steps, glared at them, and stammered:

"What! You here?"

"You don't seem pleased to meet us," laughed Harry grimly.

"I can't say I am. Remember what I told you!"

"What do you mean—not to tell Miss Fox what a cowardly villain you are?" asked Young King Brady, tauntingly.

"Sir!" roared Denton wrathfully.

"Oh, I mean every word I say, Miss Fox!"

"Well?" asked the girl in alarm.

"That man," said the boy, pointing at Denton, "must never be your husband. He is a scoundrel!"

"What!" gasped the astonished girl.

"He is in league with one of the most desperate gang of thugs in New York," said Harry, emphatically.

"You lie, Brady, you know you lie!" cried Denton furiously.

"No, I don't. I can prove it. We saw you associating with some of the lowest thieves in New York. We saw you lure two old ladies into their power to be robbed. In short, Mr. Ralph Denton, we know you. This girl shall never blight her life linking it with yours if we can stop it."

"I defy you."

"And we accept the challenge."

"So be it."

"Miss Fox, did you hear what I said?"

"Yes; but this is dreadful," faltered the girl.

"Brady," yelled Denton angrily, "you get out of here."

"Do you own this house?"

"No; but——"

"No buts about it. We brand you a liar, a coward, and a crook. You are a two-faced scoundrel. You played the gentleman by day and the villain by night. You are no good!"

An angry growl escaped the man.

He scowled at Harry, and darted toward him.

Old King Brady was on the alert, and sprang between them.

"No fighting here, Denton!" he cried.

"I'll kill that boy!" hissed the angry man.

"Remember, you are in the presence of a lady."

Recovering, Denton took off his hat to Sadie.

"Pardon me. I'm quick tempered," he exclaimed.

"You are quite excusable, Ralph," answered the girl sweetly.

"Won't you believe in me?"

"I shall until I am convinced differently."

"Thank you. These fellows, for some reason, have taken an intense dislike to me. They are hounding me, and trying to make me appear a villain in your eyes."

"We are simply telling the young lady the truth," interposed Harry coolly. "We know you are no good, and we are determined that she shall not ruin her life by marrying you."

"You'll have your labor for your pains!" hissed Denton savagely. "She believes in me, as you'll find out yet."

"Oh, we'll show her the error of doing so before it is too late," said Harry. "You can fool people a while, but you can't fool them all the time."

"This is very distressing," said Sadie, in nervous tones.

"We shall not keep it up," replied Harry. "Next time we see you, Miss Fox, I hope we shall be able to back up our assertions against this man with pretty good evidence."

They bowed to her, gave Denton a glassy stare, and withdrew.

Once in the street, Old King Brady laughed and said:

"We've put her on her guard, anyway. She will always have a suspicion of Denton now, and will want his vindication."

"He is undoubtedly a bad man," Harry answered, "and I think we will be able to show her that he is not what he represents himself to be. Which way now?"

"To get a warrant for the doctor of the sanitarium, and see if he has got any more sane people locked up in his place. I'm going to raid the asylum."

"Take along some officers?"

"Yes. Half a dozen. I'm convinced that if he would keep us there, knowing we were sane, he would do the same to others."

They procured the necessary warrant.

Going down to headquarters and explaining to the chief what they intended to do, he gave them half a dozen detectives.

Old King Brady gave them their instructions.

When this was done, they departed.

Within an hour they reached the private asylum, and Harry rang the front door bell for admittance.

One of the keepers opened the door.

They seized and secured him.

Led by Old King Brady, the officers made a rush for the doctor's office, and dashed into the room.

The rascally physician was there, and he gave a cry of alarm when he saw who his callers were.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHO THE PRISONER WAS.

"Good gracious!" the doctor gasped. "You here, Brady?"

"Yes; and we want you," Harry answered in grim tones. "For what?"

"To go to jail, of course."

A deathly pallor overspread the doctor's face.

Realizing what a serious position he was in, he gasped:

"You mean to arrest me, eh?"

"Exactly. Surrender, now, or you'll regret it."

"No, no!" he groaned, recoiling when he saw the handcuffs.

"Old King Brady, grab him!" cried the boy.

The old detective sprang at the physician and seized him.

For a brief space of time there was a terrific struggle, but the old detective got a wrestler's grip on his man and hurled him down.

Upon him fell the detective, and pinned him to the ground.

"Let me up!" roared the doctor.

"Certainly," answered Old King Brady, handcuffing him.

And he seized him by the collar and yanked him upon his feet.

Leaving the man in charge of one of the officers, the Bradys went off with the rest to search the asylum.

The keepers offered no resistance, and fled.

As the detectives knew that all the patients in the ward they had been occupying were really insane, they did not molest them.

But they started to search the rest of the building.

A few females were found in another ward, but an examination of them plainly showed that they were all crazy.

One of the officers now joined the Bradys, and said:

"There's a man in the cellar who swears he is being kept there against his will, and begged me to release him. I can't get him out, as his cell is locked. See if the doctor has the key."

Harry searched the prisoner's pockets, and found a bunch of keys.

Holding them up, he demanded:

"Will any of these fit the cell downstairs?"

"No," growled the doctor. "Don't go near that patient. He is very violent. He'll injure you, if you let him out."

"We intend to smash open the door, then, and run chances on that," replied the boy coolly. "We mean to find out who he is, and why you have got him hidden away down there."

"Don't break the door," hastily said the doctor, who saw that they were determined to get at the man. "It will cost me a lot of money to fix it again. One of my keys will fit the lock."

"Which one, you old liar?"

"The brass one."

"Very well. I'll try it."

Going downstairs with the detective who found the man, the Bradys passed into the gloomy, damp cellar.

Harry lit his dark lantern, and flashed its rays around.

At the end of the cellar were a couple of iron-bound

doors, and a man behind one of them began shouting to them:

"Help! Help! Help!"

"All right. We'll be with you in a moment," answered Harry.

As he flashed the light of his lantern upon the man, he saw that he was clad in a ragged jean suit and an old shirt.

His face was pale and covered by a scrubby beard, and his head was bald on top, and covered at the sides by gray hair.

Selecting the brass key, Harry unlocked the door.

Out rushed the barefooted old man, uttering a glad cry, and falling on his knees before the detectives, he shouted:

"Thank heaven, I will regain my freedom at last!"

"You were restrained here against your will, eh?"

"I was; and I am no lunatic, either."

"Come upstairs in the light, so we can get a good view of you."

They led the tottering man to the stairs, and he said:

"I am weak from privation and abuse. That doctor was killing me by inches. It's lucky you came, or my solitary confinement down here would have turned my brain completely."

"Was he cruel to you?" asked Harry.

"Very. Beating and starvation were my daily portion. I'm a wreck. Although an old man, I was healthy enough until I was brought here a prisoner and locked in that cell."

They went upstairs.

"We are detectives," said Harry, "and we raided this place."

"Have you got that inhuman fiend, the doctor?"

"Oh, yes," answered Harry.

"Then punish him well. He deserves it," said the man.

A few minutes later they reached the doctor's office, and he looked frightened when he saw the man the Bradys rescued.

The detectives noted his agitation.

It made them wonder, until Harry gave the old prisoner a keen, searching look.

Then the boy looked amazed.

"Good gracious, what a resemblance!" he cried.

"What do you mean?" asked Old King Brady.

"Look at the man we brought from the cellar."

Old King Brady complied.

Then he gave a startled cry.

"If I did not know as a positive fact that Tom Fox is dead," he exclaimed, "I would say this man is him."

It was now the prisoner's turn to look amazed.

"Tom Fox, did you say?" he demanded.

"Yes," assented Harry.

"Well, sir, that's my name."

"Impossible!"

"I am the John street jeweler."

"What!" cried Harry.

"The father of Sadie Fox?" asked Old King Brady.

"Yes. That's my daughter's name."

The detectives were fairly dumfounded.

Glaring at the old man, they plainly saw how much he resembled the picture that hung in his office.

Amazed and excited, Harry asked:

"But we found your corpse floating in the river, and your daughter buried the headless body."

"You were deceived by a dummy," said the old man quickly. "That wasn't my body at all, as you can see. It was a fake, gotten up to deceive people."

"By whom?"

"Ralph Denton."

"What?"

"It was he who put me here."

"For what?"

"So he could marry my daughter without opposition, and so that Sadie would have possession of my fortune at the time he married her."

"But it was Captain Jack who robbed you."

"Captain Jack and Ralph Denton are the same person."

"How do you know all this?"

"I'll explain the matter. I want justice. Through the police alone can I get it."

Harry nodded, and said:

"Go ahead. We are listening."

"Denton came back from Denver, and attacked me in my office. He tried to stab me, and I was slightly cut in the struggle. Aided by his pals, Denton carried me from my office over a plank in the window into a building in the rear. They had robbed my safe. I was drugged. When I revived somewhat, I was in a cab with Denton, and leaped out. I got home somehow. I remember going out again. Denton had followed me. He got me into his carriage again. I was carried to a vile den in Cherry street. Here a man named Big Bill Jones said he had found a body floating in the river with its head cut off. Denton proposed to dress the body in my clothes and set it afloat so that when it was found people would imagine it was me. Jones was going to sell the body to a doctor for dissection, but he agreed to do as Denton said for a certain amount of money. I was stripped and brought here, and Jones and a man named Evans set out to fix up the headless corpse to represent me."

"We found that body," said Old King Brady.

"And every one thought it was you," added Harry.

"Poor Sadie," sighed Mr. Fox. "She believes I am dead."

"Yes; and Denton is trying to marry her."

"Just what I feared. Has he succeeded?"

"Not yet."

"Thank heaven. We may yet have time to thwart him."

"Oh, yes."

"What a relief that is to my mind."

Harry called his posse of detectives together, and as no more sane men were found, they prepared to depart.

They took Tom Fox and the rascally doctor with them, and set out at once for the city prison.

Here the doctor was incarcerated.

The Bradys then brought Tom Fox home.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT THE RED RAVEN.

The clock on the mantel in the parlor of Mr. Fox's house was striking ten, when the Bradys and the old jeweler arrived at the house.

A light was gleaming in the parlor windows.

The servant opened the door.

Seeing the Bradys, she recognized them.

"Miss Fox is in the parlor," said she.

"Got company?"

"Mr. Denton."

"We will go right in."

"I'll tell her——"

"No! We want to surprise her."

"Very well, sir."

The girl stood aside, and the three men rushed in.

Flinging open the parlor door, they saw a pretty scene.

Sadie was standing near the center table, and Denton was on one knee before her, clasping one of her hands in his.

The man was saying:

"You must marry me at once. I will wait no longer for——"

The entrance of the detectives now interrupted him, and she recoiled, uttering a suppressed cry.

Denton bounded to his feet, and glared at the intruders.

"The Bradys!" he gasped.

For a moment the girl glared at the detectives' companion, and a pallor swept over her face, her eyes bulged from their sockets, and she gasped hoarsely:

"Heavens! My father——"

"Oh, Sadie, my darling child!" cried the old man, as he rushed forward and clasped her in his arms.

"Alive!" she shrieked.

"Yes, alive!" he added, kissing her troubled face.

"But what does this awful mystery mean?" she gasped.

"Simply that you were deceived by a body dressed in my clothes."

Denton was wild over the exposure.

Pointing at him, Harry cried:

"And there is the villain who is responsible for all the trouble."

"I'm betrayed!" Denton muttered.

He pulled a pistol from his pocket, and rushed for the door.

"Halt!" yelled Old King Brady, excitedly.

"Not unless I'm dead!" the villain hissed.

Bang! went the old detective's revolver, but the door flew open, intervened between them, and received the bullet.

The detectives rushed out after the man.

Knowing that he must depend upon his agility to save himself, Denton ran like a deer.

He reached the street in advance of them.

A short distance off stood a cab in which he came there.

Just as he was getting in the Bradys emerged from the house.

Bang! went Harry's pistol.

The ball wounded Denton.

He cried out with pain, and shouted to the cabman:

"Drive like fury!"

Away dashed the vehicle, and the Bradys chased it.

With a good start and a fast horse, however, the villain quickly distanced his pursuers.

Observing that they could not overtake him, the Bradys reluctantly paused, and Harry exclaimed:

"It's of no use. We can't catch him."

"Not now, perhaps, but we shall find him later," grimly answered Old King Brady.

Then they returned to the Fox house.

Upon going back into the parlor, they found the father and daughter sitting side by side on the edge of the sofa explaining all that happened to each other during the time they were separated.

"Did you catch him?" eagerly asked the old jeweler.

"No," Harry answered, shaking his head. "He escaped."

"How unfortunate."

"We won't let up until we put him in jail."

"I hope you won't. We owe all our misfortunes to him."

"Miss Fox, I hope you are disenchanted."

"I am, Mr. Brady. That man is, as you said, a villain."

"Can we do anything more for you to-night?"

"Not a thing. You interrupted him in the midst of a furious effort to get me to marry him at once. I might have obeyed him had you not come in just when you did."

The Bradys laughed and departed.

On the following day they called on their chief, and having told him all that happened, filled him with amazement.

"This is a most astounding case," said he. "I never suspected it. However, you have exposed the scoundrel, and I hope you will put the finishing touches on the matter by running Denton down, and putting him behind the bars."

"We intend to," said Harry firmly. "It's a question of locating him and the rest of the gang."

"Go and see the men you've arrested. They must know where his haunts are. If you can get a clew from them it should not be a difficult task to find Denton."

They acted upon this suggestion.

Of all the four prisoners, they found Buck Murray to be the least obstinate when they tempted him with a promise of a short sentence if he gave them the information they required.

"You can generally find him in the Red Raven," he told them finally. "It's a pretty tough den on the Bowery, near Houston street. All the gang hang out in that place when they are not working; but I can tell you it's as much as your life is worth to get caught there by the bunch."

"We'll risk it," replied Old King Brady quietly. "There never yet was a tough gang who could frighten me."

"And you'll not go back on me?"

"No, indeed. If we collar him there, you can depend that we will see that you get off with a light sentence."

"Thank you. I'll rely on your word."

The detectives left him.

Going home, they made careful preparations to make a descent upon the den in question.

The Bradys knew all about the resort.

It was only frequented by crooks of the most dangerous type, and they were men who hated the police cordially.

The officers disguised themselves.

Looking like a couple of tramps, they left home that night and proceeded down to the Bowery.

In due time they reached the entrance to the Red Raven.

It proved to be an alley.

They passed up the narrow entrance to a rear building, from the interior of which came the sounds of revelry.

Emerging into a barroom, they glanced around.

It was an evil looking den, somewhat large in size, the air was clouded with smoke, and a vile odor filled the atmosphere in a stifling manner.

The place was crowded with men, every one of whom had been a prison inmate at one time or another.

A couple of Italian musicians in a corner were playing popular tunes on a harp and violin, and a number of the gang were singing, smoking and drinking.

Denton was not in sight.

The detectives mingled with the crowd, and finally caught view of Jim Friday and Yank Pugsley sitting at a table in close conversation, while they smoked and drank.

Securing a seat near them, the Bradys listened, and heard Friday saying in low tones to his companions:

"Did yer hear the news, Yank?"

"What's that?" Pugsley demanded.

"Ther Bradys raided ther doctor's."

"What!"

"Yes; and they found Fox."

"Then ther captain's game is sp'iled."

"Of course it is."

"What a pity. He'd a-been a rich man if he could a-married that old jeweler's daughter."

"The jig is up now. Ther Bradys brought Fox home, an' nearly caught Captain Jack in ther place."

"Who told yer?"

"The captain hisself."

"Where is he?"

"I expect him here every minute."

"Anything special goin' on?"

"Yes. We are a-tryin' ter git some money, so as ter git our pals out o' jail. Ah! There comes ther captain now."

He pointed toward the entrance, and the Bradys glanced around, and saw the very man they were after just entering the den.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION.

"Old King Brady," muttered Harry, "our time has come."

"We must capture these men," replied the old detective.

"If we don't do it now, we may never get the chance again."

"But it's going to be a dangerous task, Harry."

"Yes. We must contend against every man in this room."

"All are friends of these crooks, my boy."

"And they'll fight for Captain Jack."

The person referred to had joined Pugsley and Friday. Freedom of speech was the rule in that den.

No one suspected the two alleged tramps of being detectives.

Joining his pals, Captain Jack dropped his French dialect, and said in the well-known tones of Denton:

"Well, boys, I'm glad to see you here."

"Anything new?" queried Pugsley.

"We've got to quit the town."

"Why?"

"The Bradys are onto us."

"What of it?"

"They won't quit till they arrest us, of course."

"We don't fear 'em, Captain."

"That's because you don't know them, my good fellow."

Several more of the gang separated from the rest, and crowding around Captain Jack, asked him anxiously for more definite information about the Bradys.

At this point the dare-devil detectives each drew a brace of revolvers from their pockets, flung aside their facial disguises, covered the gang with their weapons, and Harry cried:

"Gentlemen, the Bradys are here!"

A yell of dismay burst from the gang.

They glared at the intrepid officers in horror.

After a moment's silence, Captain Jack shouted:

"Sure enough, they are the Bradys!"

"Kill them!" roared Friday.

"Put out ther lights!" excitedly cried Pugsley.

Old King Brady began to sway his revolvers around threateningly.

"The first man who moves, dies!" he exclaimed coolly.

Every man there knew he meant exactly what he said, and not one of them dared to budge.

Old King Brady ran his glance over them, and smiled coldly.

"See here," said he. "We want Captain Jack and those eight men surrounding him to form in line. The rest of you had better get out of here in a big hurry."

All the crooks not wanted rushed out.

They saw that either an arrest or death was inevitable, and, as the Bradys did not want them, they discreetly withdrew.

In a few moments the room was cleared of all except Captain Jack and his gang.

Addressing the former, Old King Brady asked quietly:

"Denton, is it to be the jail or the graveyard?"

The arch villain hesitated.

"Give in!" roared Pugsley. "They've got the drop on us."

"What say you, boys?" Denton demanded of the rest.

"Surrender!" came the cry.

"I'll abide by their decision, Brady," said Denton.

"You are wise. Form in line, and march out of here. If any of you show any treachery, prepare to die."

They formed a line and marched out.

Following them to the street, the detectives called a policeman, who summoned a patrol wagon.

All the prisoners were carted away in it, and were locked up in the nearest police station.

The Bradys had triumphed over their enemies, for Captain Jack and his entire gang were now under arrest.

All the jewelry stolen from Fox had been pawned, and all the tickets were confiscated, and the jewelry recovered.

The old jeweler was glad enough to get his property

back, and he was delighted to see Denton exposed in his true colors, for it cured his daughter of her foolish infatuation for the man.

In due time the whole gang, and the villainous asylum keeper, were put on trial, and were convicted for their misdeeds.

They were sent to prison.

The John street mystery was solved.

New York no longer was a prey to one of the worst gangs of crooks who ever infested its slums.

All the newspapers spoke in the highest terms of praise for the gallant Bradys for breaking up the gang, and clearing up the perplexing mystery of Mr. Fox.

When the detectives met their chief, he warmly congratulated them, and ultimately appointed them on another case.

It was fraught with peril, and abounded with adventures of the most thrilling kind.

We cannot, for lack of space, give the facts here.

But we have our story of the case in preparation, and our next number will set forth the details.

Until we encounter the gallant officers in their new work, we will bid them adieu.

THE END.

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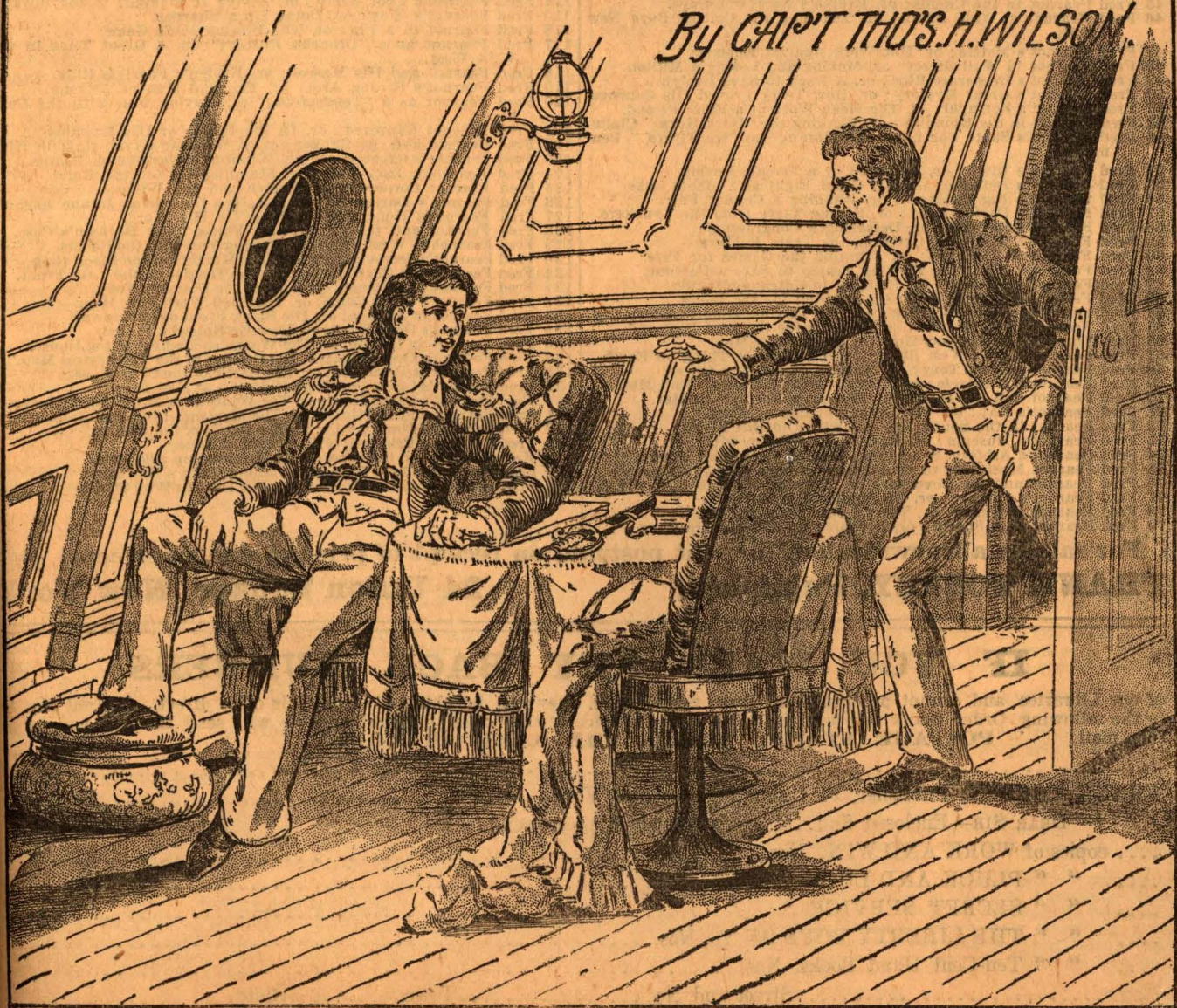
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